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ABSTRACT

Examining the normative and regulative effects of parental influence on the educational mobility of high school youth and the changing patterns of educational mobility, rural high school seniors in Ontonagon County, Michigan were surveyed in 1957/58 (N=254), 1968 (N=193), and 1974 (N=201). The key variables examined were: (1) college plans; (2) parental rapport (regulative parental influence measured by an attitudinal scale designed to elicit youth perceptions of parental rapport); (3) social class origin (normative parental influence as measured by the Duncan Socioeconomic Index for Occupations); (4) scholastic performance level (rank). Findings indicated: parental rapport set the stage for transmission of normative influences which affect educational mobility (especially for boys), independent of, yet in the same manner as the influence of social class; low class boys lacking strong parental rapport were far less likely to plan to go to college or to rank in the top half of their class, but among girls, the conditional effect of social class and parental rapport was considerably less apparent; the intervening effects of scholastic performance were substantial among boys and girls; the process of educational mobility was firmly woven into the socio-historical context of the times (e.g., during the 60's, the traditional barriers to educational mobility were somewhat mitigated, but by 1974, some barriers appeared to have been reconstructed). (JC)

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PARENTAL RAPPORT AND THE CHANGING PATTERNS OF EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY AMONG HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS IN A RURAL MICHIGAN COUNTY

by

Daniel C. Clay

U.S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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ABSTRACT

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Daniel C. Clay

Educational attainment in modern American society has become a leading criterion by which individuals are "sorted-out" into various social and economic roles. Consequently, a crucial stage in the career development of young people is at the point of deciding whether or not to pursue a higher level of education after graduation from high school.

An extensive body of research literature has shown that parents play a major role in the educational decision-making process. This study begins by constructing a simple typology that draws a conceptual distinction between the "normative" and the "regulative" aspects of parental influence. Stemming from a principle assumption of socialization theory, this distinction asserts that: (1) parents affect the aspirations of their children by the norms and values they pass on to them through the process of socialization (normative influence), and (2) the nature of the parent-child relationship regulates the extent to which children perceive and share the expectations and value patterns of their parents (regulative influence).

The empirical analyses of this study explore the effects of both the normative and the regulative parental influence structures on the educational mobility of rural high school youth. Also, by utilizing a

longitudinal research design, the focus of inquiry is extended to an exploration of the balance and interplay among changing patterns in the structuring of educational mobility over three points in time.

The key study variables are as follows: 1) The major dependent variable, plan to go to college, was treated as a dichotomy of those students who did or did not plan to attend a college or university. 2) Parental rapport represents the regulative dimension of parental influence, and is measured by an attitudinal scale designed to tap youngsters' own perceptions of rapport with parents. 3) Social class origin, indicative of the normative influences of parents, is measured by father's occupation classified according to the Duncan "Socioeconomic Index for Occupations." 4) Scholastic performance level, reflecting educational achievement as an early step in the educational mobility process, was derived from the student's graduation rank.

Ontonagon County, the research site, is situated in the relatively poor, remote, and rural northwestern region of Michigan's upper peninsula. Information was gathered via self-administered questionnaires on three comparable populations of graduating high school seniors, comprising near total representations of the county's graduating classes in the years 1957/58 (N=254), 1968 (N=193), and 1974 (N=201).

The findings that reflect the conditional effects of parental rapport and socioeconomic background on the school achievement and college plans of youngsters, are of particular interest to the general objectives of this research. It was found that parental rapport sets the stage for the transmission of normative influences which affect the educational mobility of young people (especially boys), independent of, yet in the same manner as the influence of social class.

Low class boys who lacked strong, positive rapport with their parents,

tended to be far less likely to plan to go to college or to rank in the upper half of their school class, than low class boys who did experience favorable parental rapport. Among low class boys, and to a lesser extent among the high class boys, the diffuse form of parental support gained via positive rapport with parents, was a key requisite to upward educational mobility. The conditional effect of social class and parental rapport among the girls, however, was considerably less apparent.

The intervening effects of scholastic performance were substantial among boys as well as girls. Youngsters lacking a high level of school achievement, were forced to rely on the conditions in the home, viz., socioeconomic status and/or rapport with parents, if they were to be educationally mobile.

Finally, from a longitudinal perspective, it was concluded that the process of educational mobility is firmly woven into the socio-historical context of the times. This is partly because the structuring of educational ambition, unlike many other social processes, is inescapably shaped by the nature of many major social institutions.

During the 1960's: deepening involvement in the Viet Nam War, mounting youth dissatisfaction and student unrest, general economic expansion and prosperity, and the institution of an implicit "open door" policy of the educational system itself, caused respective cohorts to move from a traditional profile of generally low college plans, heavily favoring boys, and high class youngsters in 1957/58, to a situation marked by high college plans, equally represented by males and females, and by youngsters from high and low class backgrounds in 1968. By 1974, however, some of the traditional structural barriers to educational mobility appeared to have been reconstructed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the more important issues confronting high school seniors is "what to do after graduation?" Typically, a student might ponder: "should I press on, furthering my formal education at a college or university, or enroll for training in a trade or vocation, or should I perhaps enter the job market right off?" An adolescent's calculated response to this question (or behavioral reaction to situational imperatives that eventually will demand some kind of action) sets the stage for and, indeed, determines in a large measure the individual's future role, position, and life chances in the system.

A complex society such as ours necessarily means a broad division of labor and a high degree of specialization (Durkheim 1933, pp 39-40). With increasing specialization of the work force and a greater differentiation of social and economic roles, the societal need for higher education and other institutionalized forms of advanced and/or focused training, is reinforced and, in many respects, becomes ever more difficult to satisfy. In short, as our modern society develops, the demand for highly skilled human resources grows accordingly, and a work force stratified by degrees of training is created, which ranges from entirely unskilled occupations to professions exacting ten or more years of training beyond the high school level.

Furthermore, common sense suggests and countless researchers have established that increasingly in modern societies, and individual's educational attainments affect the patterning of his or her career and, sub-

sequently, that individual's abilities to build a satisfying and rewarding life style. Parsons (1959) remarks that as a result of the general process of occupational and educational upgrading, graduation from high school is rapidly becoming the norm for minimum satisfactory educational attainment, and the most significant determinant for future occupational status has come to depend on whether or not members of and age-cohort go to college.

Blau and Duncan (1967, pp 429-30) go a step further in explaining the importance of educational attainment by noting that in a society such as our own, characterized by a high level of social differentiation, ever increasing universalistic standards of evaluation come into play. The implication of heightened universalism is that the achieved status of man, his accomplishments (such as level of education) and what he can do, carries more weight than features of his ascribed status, i.e., what he is. The vital point of the present discussion is that, as almost all youngsters now complete high school, advanced/specialized schools have become the primary sorting-out mechanism for upward mobility. In other words, if "all" boys and girls receive a high school diploma, then they are "all alike;" the ultimate criterion which distinguishes one individual from another, at least in terms of training, is nested in the so-called institution of higher learning.

But not everyone elects to go on to college; many prefer to get jobs, often as semi-skilled or unskilled laborers, others pick up trades or enter vocational training schools, and there are always some who drop out prior to graduation from high school only to find that their occupational alternatives have been rather sharply curtailed. Inevitably, the boys and girls in this latter group with few exceptions wind up on the lower rungs of the occupational hierarchy, and invariably receive rewards

of a lesser order. Whether or not a youngster opts to pursue higher education after high school, it is clear that the decision remains an extremely crucial one for most. Even for girls who have been traditionally bound by societal expectations to marry and raise a family, their "chances" to marry upward are greater if they go on to college, where they may interact with a population of presumably upwardly mobile males.

My general aim in this thesis is to pursue certain facets of the educational decision-making process (i.e., going on to college). I am especially interested in the patterning of those decisions over time. More specifically, however, my concern is with the factors that structure the career choices of graduating seniors in rural America.

Generally speaking, there are two predominant environmental situations within which adolescents might be expected to experience the greatest structural pressures toward molding their educational intentions: the school environment and the family or home environment. In each of these settings, youngsters are involved in complex systems of role relationships with the important people in their lives, namely, the individuals around them: teachers, peers, brothers and sisters, and parents. These interrelationships, through an intricate network of role obligations and role expectations, impose a system of constraints and inducements on behavior (Parsons and Shils 1951, p 153), and the "internalization" of these role expectations comprises an important aspect of the youngster's socialization into the broader society.

The family and school, of course, are institutions that serve as the principle socializing agencies and, in that respect, also as significant mechanisms of social control. Through the socialization process individuals develop the commitments and capacities for becoming functioning members of society, i.e., for future role-performance (Parsons 1959).

But in serving as an agency of socialization, the school also functions as a sorting-out mechansim instrumental in building a youngster's "realistic" appraisal of self, setting the pattern of individual achievement motivation vis-ā-vis inherent abilities, providing a setting for the distribution of opportunities (both facilities and rewards), and thereby playing a key part in the allocation of personnel to fill the various occupational roles in society. This sorting-out process, which gains enormous significance and power in the light of the school's function as the principal societal agency for formal education (i.e., socialization in a more focused, specified manner than by the family), is legitimated within the framework of the American equalitarian ideology by the school's adherence to the code of "universalism."

Theoretically then, a highly "efficient" educational system will train and distribute members of society so as to maximize their interests and capabilities, thereby enabling the system to function at its "optimum level." In no advanced society however, has the full maximization of interests and talents been achieved, i.e., the opportunities for specialized training are not always open to the most "capable" individuals, and the persons most highly trained for a specialized occupation are not always the ones who fill that role in society. Factors external to the school environment create structural "cross-winds" which operate in apparent opposition to the universalistic standards that serve as the organizational principles of modern, state-supported school systems.

Family influences, of course, are a case in point, and are of paramount importance in present day speculation on the role of the school. A wide spectrum of research has demonstrated that various structural attributes of the family have a strong bearing on the educational aspirations of youth, and in some instances supercede the impact of the educational

system itself. The effects of variables associated with the position of the family in the broader social structure on the educational plans of American youth, have also served as the foci of a considerable volume of social research.[1] Researchers have shown that among the more powerful social structural determinants are father's occupation and the education level of the parents', which are commonly employed as measures of social class background of the family. Characteristic attributes pertaining to internal family structure include: size of parental family, sibling position, intellectual climate of the home, and parental support of educational intentions.

The question of the relative importance of the school environment versus the home environment is a vital one indeed. From the heart of the issue has emerged public skepticism about the true effects of our schools, and a demand for a large scale documentation of the public education system in the U.S.. In 1966, in a seemingly direct response to this demand, an official study entitled, Equality of Educational Opportunity, was conducted by James S. Coleman (1966). Although the primary focus of this study was on the racial inequalities within the education system, Coleman also reported on the measurable impact of the family on the educational motivation and achievement of high school aged children. Coleman notes that his and other studies have consistently shown that variations in family background account for more variation in school achievement than do variations in school characteristics. Similarly, Jencks and Riesman (1969) comment that:

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[1] Citations and a discussion of some of these researches are presented in minor detail in the following section, entitled, "Parental influence and the college plans of youth."

> the heart of the problem is not, we think, in the educational system. So long as the distribution of power and privilege among adults remain radically unequal, and so long as some children are raised by adults at the bottom while others are raised by adults at the top, the children will more often than not turn out unequal. In part this may be because parents with time, money, and the respect of their fellows can do a better job raising their children than the parents who lack those things. But the real point is that children raised in different circumstances necessarily have different hopes, expectations, and compulsions. We suspect that these differences account for more of the class variation in college chances than all other differences combined.

The present study is grounded on the above premise: that certain structural features of the family play a significant role in determining the prospects and ambitions of high school seniors after graduation.

Prior to an empirical assessment of this issue, it is necessary to explore some of the relevant literature pertaining to the general influence of parents on the college plans of their children. A variety of dimensions have been tapped by researchers in an effort to understand those manifold influences. In the following section my aim is to outline relevant portions of past research in these areas, in an attempt to build a conceptual distinction between what shall be later termed the "normative" and the "regulative" aspects of parent-child interaction. From this distinction a general statement is derived of the problem area to be addressed in this thesis. Subsequent sections will then be devoted to a directed review of the literature on the "regulative" aspect of parental influence, and to the construction of a conceptual causal model, incorporating school influences, as well as family influences, in the structuring of the upward educational mobility of youth.

PARENTAL INFLUENCE AND THE COLLEGE PLANS OF YOUTH

The influence of parents on the college plans of their children, as indicated earlier, is a multidimensional phenomenon. Kahl (1953) undertook a pioneering research in pursuit of the effects of parents' social position, measured by the father's occupational status, on the educational and occupational aspirations of adolescent boys. Similarly Rosen (1956) and Sewell et al. (1957) looked at the social class backgrounds of high school students and discovered, as did Kahl, a positive influence on educational achievement orientation. Since these earlier studies, a host of researchers have corroborated their results over a wide range of populations (Bordua 1960; Simpson 1962; Blau and Duncan 1967; Rehberg and Westby 1967; Duncan et al. 1968; Sewell et al. 1968a, 1968b, 1969; Williams 1972; and Kerckhoff 1974).

Other researchers have attempted to sift out the specific dimensions of the social class configuration which account for variation in the educational plans of high school students. For example, Schwarzweller and Lyson (1974), in organizing their own research on this problem, suggest that it may be useful for this particular line of inquiry to conceptualize the social class configuration as having two major dimensions. First there is the material dimension which essentially represents the availability of economic resources in the family that, for example, could be set aside for a youngster's college costs. Family income level is characteristically employed as an indicant of this dimension. Second, there is the nonmaterial aspect of social class which refers to the norms and values that are passed on to the youngster and help him to shape his career plan.

Beside the non-material-material distinction, other, more "education-specific," normative factors commonly associated with the social class

configuration have proven to be valuable determinants of a youngster's educational aspriations. Bordua (1960) for example, studied the effects of parental stress on college plans as measured by the perceived encouragement to go to college. He found that encouragement from parents did have a direct influence on college aspirations; this was especially true for girls at the high stress levels and for boys at the low stress levels. More importantly he discovered that much of the influence of social class on aspirations was interpreted by parental influence. Both SES and stress by parents, however, exerted some independent influences as well. Later on, with the use of path analysis and the construction of complex causal models, testing of the normative influence of parental encouragement lent support to the earlier findings of Bordua (1960) and others: Kahl (1953), and McDill and Coleman (1965). First, Rehberg and Westby in 1967, studied the college plans of sophomore boys in Pennsylvania. Shortly thereafter, Sewell et al. (1968a, 1968b, 1969, 1970) and Jacobsen (1971) reaffirmed in a series of analyses, Rehberg's and Westby's findings that " education-specific" parental influence is, at least for certain populations, the strongest and best indicator of college intentions. "Parental encouragement," they found, interprets a major portion of the effect of social class. Finally, two other variables closely resembling the parental encouragement factor have been introduced and have consistently produced similar results: "parental aspirations" (Pearlin 1967; Duncan 1968; Kandel and Lesser 1969, 1972), and "parental expectations" (Williams 1972).

Thus far, the discussion has focused on the role that parents play in structuring the educational futures of their children through the transmission of norms and values (in this case with reference to the value of higher education). In the light of this particular form of

interaction, Rommetveit (1954) has aptly conceived of parents as "norm senders." The empirical findings covered in this section provide ample evidence that the passage of aspriant norms by parents exerts a powerful impact on the educational careers of their children.

The socialization process involves the internalization of the dominant norms and value patterns expressed by parents. This process, however, is not entirely one-sided. The fact that parents emphasize one value over another, or one form of behavior over another, does not assure that children will either percieve or accept what the parents (either intentionally or unintentionally) are trying to impress. Thus, the influence of parents on the educational plans of their children depends not only on the normative climate in the family, but also on the extent to which children recognize and are willing to share the norms and values of their parents.

Of central importance to the normative influence of parents then, is the notion of the positive of negative quality of the parent-child relationship. A factor of this nature taps the degree to which the situation in the home favors an effective pattern of interaction by which parents are able to transmit their own attitudes, as well as their perception and assessments of the norms and value patterns of the larger society, onto their children. It is an assumption of this research that insofar as this interaction can be measured, devoid as it is of any normative (goal-directed) content, we have an indication of how effectively other influences, which do carry normative (goal-directed) content, will be passed on. Similarly, an assumption of aspiration socialization theory states that the structure of the parent-child relationship affects the extent to which parents are able to transmit their values and expectations to their children (Rosen 1964, p 59). This contention argues that:

(1) parents affect the aspirations of their youngsters by the norms they pass on to them, and (2) selectivity and regulation of the degree of this normative influence is determined by the quality of the parent-child relationship.

This distinction between the normative character of parental influence and its regulative quality is the point of departure for this research. Until now my general concern has been with the former half of this distinction; i.e., the norms and values that are transferred from one generation to the next. These norms and values stem from the class aspects of the braoder social structure on the one hand as well as from the structural forces of direct parental encouragement, on the other. The specific target of inquiry of this thesis however, is on the regulative aspect of parental influence, as described above. Thus, the fundamental problem that is addressed is: What effect does the structure (quality) of parent-child relationships have on the college plans of adolescents?

The ways in which the career ambitions of youth are effected by the structure of parent-child relationships have been relatively unexplored by comparison to the research carried out on the normative aspect of parental influence. In the section to follow I shall briefly review the research literature relevant to a more holistic conceptualization of the structure of the parent-child interaction and its consequences for the educational success of young people.

ACHIEVEMENT AND THE STRUCTURE OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

In an effort to test, sociologically, the assertion often found in psychoanalytic literature that "unsatisfactory interpersonal relations in early childhood produce insecurity which is translated into neurotic

striving for power, recognition and success," Dynes, Clarke and Dinitz (1956) arrived at some basically supportive conclusions. They found that college students with unsatisfactory parental relationships were more likely to be high aspirants, whereas those with satisfactory relationships tended to be low aspirants. Three fundamental features of their research, however, create drawbacks to its comparability with the approach being taken for the present study. First, the psychoanalytic literature suggests that the family relationships during early childhood, not in late adolescence, have an effect on aspirations. Second, they used a scale which measures occupational aspiration level, not educational aspiration level. Third, their sample was drawn from a population of college students, who in many respects, are by definition all high aspirants.

Other researches have also been reported which tend to support the psychoanalytic perspective. Ellis (1952) for example, found evidence among women, that upward mobility occurs out of emotional drives originating from unsatisfactory parent-child relationships. In a study of successful business executives, Warner and Abegglen (1955) found results consistent with those of Dynes, Clarke and Dinitz, and with those of Ellis, that a depriving family milieu at childhood often leads to upward social mobility. Again, comparability between this study and the studies of both Ellis, and Warner and Abegglen is dubious, largely because of the special nature of their samples. The Ellis sample was composed of highly successful unmarried career women, and Warner and Abegglen used a sample of business executives. Rushing (1964), lending some support to the "deprivation-aspirations" hypothesis, was able to specify that unsatisfactory family relationships lead to high mobility aspirations for girls (but not for boys) with respect to the father-daughter dyad. In addition, Rushing concluded that boys (but not girls)

from high social class families tended to have high mobility aspirations, and for neither boys nor girls was social class associated with the quality of the parent-child relationship.

In 1968, Gnagey examined the effect of parental acceptance on the over and under-achievement of 192 college students. His results showed that males (not females) who had high acceptance by parents during childhood, tended to have less anxiety and were under-achievers. Although this study does not measure achievement aspirations, comparability between aspirations and previously attained level of achievement may be assumed. The underlying theme is that academic achievement is bound up in the same configuration with educational aspiration and attainment; they are integral parts of what some might call the general "success orientation" of American youth today. Grades in school, as well as educational aspirations, have been widely established as important stepping stones in the status attainment process, independent of social class background. Consequently, parents who strongly encourage their children to go to college, will more than likely have similar attitudes and interest in how well their children perform in school (Kahl 1953; Sewell et al. 1969, 1970; Williams 1972; Kerckhoff 1974; Schwarzweller and Lyson 1974).

A growing body of research in opposition to the principle argument developed thus far (i.e., that negative parent-child relationships lead to high mobility aspirations) contends that high aspirations are more likely to occur where there are positive relationships between parents and children. In a national sample of 1000 adolescent boys, Douvan and Adelson (1958) explored the effects of family structure on mobility aspirations. They concluded that the downwardly mobile young-

sters pictured their parents as harsh and suspicious while the upwardly mobile tended to have more congenial relationships with their parents. Similarly they found that the more satisfactory a youngster's interaction with his parents proved to be, the greater the likelihood that he would place high value on educational achievement (Morrow and Wilson 1961; Peppin 1963; Christopher 1967).[2]

More recently, Furstenberg (1971) demonstrated that the degree to which adolescent boys, and to some extent adolescent girls, respond to the normative influence of their parents depends on the quality of the parent-child interaction (measured by the "amount of time spent together"). In a similar vein, Kandel and Lesser (1972, p 156) showed that family interaction patterns are related to the perceived parental influence on career plans. Noteworthy however, is the finding that actual (not perceived) parental influence was not affected by how well youngsters related to their parents.

In their study of educational plans of American and Norwegian youth, Schwarzweller and Lyson (1974) found that "perceived parental interest" is directly related to father's occupation on the one hand and to college plans on the other. This study is of special interest because of the uniqueness of the scale designed to tap a youngster's general feelings about how he relates with his parents. Three of the items deal with the quality of the relationship, and the remaining two had a more education-specific, normative loading (See Lyson 1972 for specific

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[2] Although these studies supported the same general hypothesis, their samples were neither entirely comparable, nor were their results entirely consistent. Morrow and Wilson had a selected sample of high school boys with I.Q. scores greater than 120, Peppin tested a sample of primary school children, and Christopher, among a sample of high school students, found support for the "postiive parental relationship-aspirations" hypothesis only among females (not males).

items). The Schwarzweller-Lyson scale, therefore, seen in the context of my earlier discussion, is a "mid-stream" indicator of parental influence, neither fully normative nor fully regulative. The result is that correlations are weaker than those normally found using more explicit measures, such as "parental encouragement," and slightly stronger than is often shown in studies strictly interested in the quality of the parent-child relationship. The important point to be made out of this is that as a measure of parent-child interaction becomes increasingly education-specific, it will tend to bear greater resemblance to the normative indicators of parental influence, (e.g., "Parental encouragement" and "parental stress on college").

One additional study (Kerckhoff 1974) exploring the effects of the parent-son relationship on the college plans of high school boys from the mid-west, uncovered absolutely no association. Kerckhoff also found no correlation between a family's social standing and the quality of interaction. Suggesting perhaps that youngsters get along with their parents equally well at any social level.

Clearly, the findings outlined in the present section are not wholly consistent with one another. Indeed, they form two separate sets of findings which are in more or less direct opposition. It is the need for a deeper understanding of the conflicting nature of these researches which becomes, at least in part, the raison d'être of the present study. But before moving into the empirical phase of this project, it may be useful to conceptualize, in a cuasal framework, the interrelationships of some of the structural features of the home and school environments which may affect a youngster's decision to pursue a college education.

A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Judging from the research reviewed in this study, a youngster's decision to attend college after graduation from high school, is a choice which is structured by several important factors. In addition to a youngster's relationship with his parents, the central variable, social class background (one indication of the normative influence of the family) and scholastic performance (the academic status achieved in school) have proven to be of exceptional value in explaining why some young people elect to pursue higher education, and why others do not. These three principal factors, parent-child relations, social class and grades in school, can be arranged in a causal sequence pointing toward the problematic variable, namely, education plan:[3]

SOCIAL CLASS BACKGROUND

SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT COLLEGE PLANS

PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

RECAPITULATION

In our society a youngster's decision to pursue a college career is crucial to his future placement in the social hierarchy. "Equal opportunity for all" has been a dominant theme in the American value system and a principal tenet on which the public educational system of this country rests. But the "efficiency" of the school as a sorting-out

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[3] On purely temporal grounds this model assumes that one has a social class background and relationships with parents before achieving an academic status or deliberating a college career. But a conceptual arrangement of variables in a developmental sequence is often problematic and demands careful consideration of underlying assumptions of causal ordering. Such considerations will be postponed to a later section of this research which will attempt to "formalize" the above model.

mechanism is put into question as certain structural features of the family are shown throughout the literature to exert a significant influence in the development of career plans of adolescents.

A conceptual distinction was drawn between the normative influence of parents, and the influence of the quality of the parent-child relationship. Briefly, I contend that (1) parents affect the aspirations of their youngsters by the norms they pass on to them, and (2) selectivity and regulation of the degree of this normative influence is determined by the quality of the parent-child relationship. The general problem area of the present thesis deals primarily with the latter half of this distinction, i.e., the regulative aspect of parental influence. More specifically, the problem is to seek out the effects of the structure of parent-child relationships on the college plans of rural youngsters, and to explore variations in these effects by sex, scholastic performance, and social class, in a period of rapid social change.

Past research on the impact of parental relations on the educational success of youngsters has tended to conceptualize these relationships as "stimuli" to which the child responds by higher or lower levels of aspiration and achievement. One body of literature asserts that high educational aspirations are a consequence of positive parental relations, while another set suggests that aspirants emerge from a negative family milieu. The concept developed here suggests that rather than viewing parent-child relationships as a "source" of influence (to which the child may react with either high or low aspirations), they can be seen as a "condition" for the passage of influences of a normative type.

Outlined in the chapter to follow are the methods and procedures undertaken in the research design and data collection employed in this study. Special emphasis is placed on the conceptualization of the key study variables, and on the longitudinal nature of the research design.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH DESIGN: DATA AND METHODS

A noteworthy feature of the current study is its longitudinal design, which draws upon data from three high school cohorts spanning a period of 17 years. As suggested earlier, "going to college" may not have the same meaning today as is did in 1957, the baseline for this project. Consideration of a college education has increasingly become an expected behavior for most youngsters and their parents. In the light of persistent attempts at educational reform in the past two decades or so, it is also plausible that the influences of social class background and scholastic achievement in determining a young person's decision to pursue a college career have undergone significant modifications. Then too, we must consider the substantial body of literature, both popular and professional, which argues the possibility of an increasing "generation gap" between parents and adolescent children; perhaps the older and younger "sets" don't get along as well as they used to. The important point is that the interplay and balance among key elements in the normative environment of young people do not and, in a complex society such as ours, probably cannot remain static. Factors and factor patternings which have been instrumental in structuring the careers of earlier generations are not necessarily of the same character as those which influence the careers of contemporary generations. By observing this process and its concomitant influence structure at selected points in time, we are able to add an entirely new dimension to our understanding of the status attainment process. A time (i.e., contextual change) dimension offers a depth of perspective

and a sense of directional trends which would not otherwise be available from a simple cross-sectional survey design.

RESEARCH ORGANIZATION AND STUDY POPULATIONS

Ontonagon County, located on Lake Superior in the relatively remote, far northwestern corner of Michigan's upper peninsula, comprises the area from which our study population has been drawn. It is the third largest county in Michigan, but also one of the most rural and sparsely populated in the state. In 1960, the U.S. census enumerated slightly upward of ten thousand inhabitants (10,584); 2,358 resided in the village of Ontonagon, the largest center in the county. By 1970, the county's total population dropped slightly to 10,548. Since births greatly exceeded deaths during this period, it is likely that any subsequent population growth was neutralized by outmigration. The estimated outmigration from the county from 1960 to 1970 amounted to 715 persons (Singh 1975).

The ethnic and religious composition of Ontonagon county is historically rather homogeneous. Much of the country was settled during the nineteenth century by a large number of migrants from Finland. Today, roughly 70-80% of the high school aged children are of Finnish origin through one or both of their parents. As Finland is largely a Protestant country, so Ontonagon County is predominately Protestant, of which, the major segment is of the Lutheran denomination.

In 1950 the economy of Ontonagon County, for the most part, was based upon agriculture and a few small scale pulp and lumber operations. The general trend of outmigration resembled that of the rural sector of America in general. From 1950 until 1957, the county began its dramatic change in economic and population characteristics. The increased price of copper

during the Korean War elicited a response from the U.S. government to support the revitalization of the White Pine copper mine. By 1956 about 1,000 persons were employed in the mine, making jobs available to many who were unable to find fulltime work before the mine reopened (Goldsmith & Beegle 1962). Subsequently, the well established trend of outmigration from the area quickly, but only temporarily reversed. Needless to say, the economic well-being within the county was improved at this time. Since 1957, general economic growth has shown a steady upward trend. Today there are about 3500 persons employed in the White Pine mine and, consistently, the pulp industry has prospered. Farming and farm related occupations, on the other hand, have suffered rapid decline during this period. In short, the economic base in Ontonagon County has shifted in the last few decades from agriculture to industry.

Our focus in the present study, which involves the influence of the family milieu on educational aspirations, is only one aspect of a broader and on-going project designed to explore the future of young people in rural Michigan. The project's duration covers a period from 1957 until the present, and is divided into three distinct temporal phases. The initial segment of rural youth was studied in the years 1957 and 1958. Ten years later in 1968, and then six years after that in 1974, two other cohorts were brought into the study.

In the spring of 1957, information for the initial survey was gathered from virtually the entire population of juniors (N=145) and seniors (N=124) enrolled in the county's six high school districts. A year later, in an effort to expand the sample size and to obtain data on attitudinal developments between the junior and senior years, the 1958 senior class members who had participated in the study a year earlier as high school juniors, were asked to complete an identical second

questionnaire.[4] Thus, comparable information was available on members of the graduating classes of 1957 and 1958. For present purposes, these data are combined, and make up the first cohort and initial phase of this project (N=254). The distributions by sex for this cohort and for the 1968 and 1974 cohorts are presented in Table 0 below.

Table 0. Total Number of Respondents in the Three Study Populations by Sex.

	1957/58	1968	1974
Boys	124	90	100
Girls	130	103	101
Total	254	193	201

The second phase of the project got under way in March of 1968. By this time, several changes had been made in the Ontonagon County school districts. Through consolidation, three districts were eliminated while one new larger district was created. The White Pine school district was established primarily to accomodate the growing numbers of families coming into the locality for employment in the rapidly expanding White Pine copper mine. In 1968, nearly all of the enrolled seniors participated in the study. These students comprise the project's second cohort (N=193; 90 boys and 103 girls).

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[4] In 1957, 145 juniors completed questionnaires. In 1958, all seniors were given the questionnaire but only those seniors who had participated in the study as juniors in 1957, are included in the present study; students entering or leaving the class during the year between the two samplings were excluded from the 1958 cohort.

The most recent phase of the project was conducted in the spring of 1974. The four school districts were the same as in 1968. The only significant change was a slight, overall increase in school enrollments. Again, nearly an entire age cohort was surveyed (N=201; 100 boys and 101 girls). Students who were absent on the day the questionnaires were administered were given an opportunity to participate later on during the week. Adding to the concerted efforts on the part of the researchers to assure a 100% sample of the three study populations, is the fact that nearly all youngsters of high school age are actually enrolled in school. The "drop out" rate in Ontonagon County has been and is exceptionally low; the U.S. Census in 1960 reports that 97.3% of the 16-17 year olds in the county were enrolled in school.

Noteworthy is the fact that there is a seventeen year time span between the initial (1957/58 cohort and the most recent (1974) cohort). Nearly an age generation separates the two; in fact, sons and daughters of 1957/58 graduates could conceivably be included as members of the 1974 class; in no case however did this occur. There are other factors besides age which distinguish the cohorts. Most important of all are the dramatic socioeconomic changes which have come about in this once relatively isolated and economically disadvantaged rural Michigan county, which surrounded and conditioned the world view especially of the latter two cohorts.

In addition to changes in the economic sphere, the three cohorts also experienced vast socio-historical changes. For example, although the social conditions for the 1968 graduating seniors from Ontonagon County high schools were economically favorable, the escalation of the Viet Nam War made the prospect of serving in the armed forces imminent. Also at this time severe upheaval in the system, characterized by civil

rights movements and student activism, produced a social climate very different from that of the 1950's and from that of the present. Consequently, we might expect that such contextual changes would manifest themselves in the way young people perceive the world and respond to the structural exegencies which surround them in their society.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

In each phase of field work, questionnaires were administered by a staff member to students in a classroom setting. They were designed to tap a wide range of topics related to the youngsters' perceptions of their own social situations in Ontonagon County, and about their plans for the future. Specific questions explored the students' attitudes toward their community and the area, their perceptions of relationships with parents, their educational and occupational aspirations and expectations, and their thoughts and feelings about migration. School records provided additional information on academic achievement, I.Q., and other test scores. High school staff members also aided in verifying information regarding the occupations of the students' fathers.

For the sake of maintaining comparability, the basic portions of these questionnaires underwent only minor alterations from one phase of the project to the next; a primary aim was to assure measurement equivalency over time.[5] Regarding the variables central to this thesis, apart from the addition of four new items to the battery of items tapping

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[5] We recognize, however, that since social contexts were and are rapidly changing in this once relatively poor, rather remote region of Michigan, the meanings attached to some questions and items in the survey may also have been affected. As in comparative studies of two or more diverse societies, those kinds of equivalency problems tend also to enter into the interpretive phase of longitudinal studies such as this.

parental relations in 1974 (which are not included in the scale developed for this study), no change has been made. Other portions of the 1974 version, however, were considerably shortened on the basis of earlier experiences.

STUDY VARIABLES

For purposes of the present study, five main variables are selected from the available data: 1) plans to go to college, 2) social class origin, 3) relationships with parents, 4) record of academic performance and 5) sex. A clarification of my conceptual and operational approach is in order.

College Plan

As almost all specialized and professional occupational roles in our society depend on the achievement of a high level of formal training, a major step in the process of upward social mobility is a youngster's decision to pursue a college education. This decision, "plan to go to college," is the dependent variable.

But college plans are somewhat problematic when considered over time, since a college degree may vary in value according to the supply of college graduates relative to the going societal demand for individuals with high levels of education. It is commonly argued today that the social and market values of a college diploma are gradually declining. Paul Woodring (1968) looks at the historical trends in terms of sheer numbers of college graduates to explain just one aspect of the changing meaning of a college degree:

> As more people go to college the value of a degree will depreciate just as the value of a high school diploma has decreased in recent decades, because no symbol possessed by millions can give assurance of high status. In 1900, when only 10 per cent of the young people went through secondary school, a high school diploma provided entree

> into the white-collar class; today, with some 75 per cent completing high school, many high school graduates enter skilled and semi-skilled trades. In the past a college degree has provided the open door to the upper-middle class that is composed largely of professional people and executives. But when the time comes that from one-half to two-thirds of all adults are college graduates (as compared to today's 10 per cent) the degree will mean less socially because many people with such degrees will be engaged in sub-professional and nonexecutive positions. (Woodring 1968, p 59).

Although higher education has come to be regarded somewhat differently from what it was fifteen or twenty years ago, the contention here is that the decision to pursue a college degree, throughout this era, represents an attempt on the part of a young person to broaden his or her occupational horizons and to "get ahead" in life.

In order to specify educational plans, the respondent was asked: "Do you intend to get further training after high school? a) Yes b) No c) Don't know. If yes: What do you plan? a) College b) Trade School c) Apprentice d) Other." Students who planned to pursue further training at the "college" level were classified in the upwardly mobile category. Those who were uncertain as to their plans, or were planning some non-college training, or simply had no intention of pursuing any further education after high school were classified in the non-college category.[6]

Social Class Origin

Social class origin invariably emerges as a very important factor in explaining why some youngsters go on to college and others do not. Social class, used in a general sense, refers to levels of "class status" within the social stratification system. "Class status" according

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[6] A follow-up of the 1974 cohort a year later revealed a very high degree of association between youngsters' college plans and their actual behavior; for boys the association is somewhat stronger than for girls.

to Weber (1947) is:

> the typical probability that a given state of a) provision with goods, b) external conditions of life, and c) subjective satisfaction or frustration will be possessed by an individual or a group. These probabilities define class status in so far as they are dependent on the kind and extent of control or lack of it which the individual has over goods or services and existing possibilities of their exploitation for the attainment of income or receipts within a given economic order. (Weber, 1947).

Essentially the focus of attention is on a situation defined by a system of social relationships which, seen as a whole, leads toward greater or lesser life chances. Any class status has several structural dimensions which are of paramount importance to its definition: relative educational level; occupation; power; and material holdings or income, are some examples. As one rises on any one of these dimensions the higher his class status will be. Social classes are formed out of aggregations of similar class statuses, to borrow again from Weber's thinking. The significant point for present purposes is that each class status has characteristic norms and values attached to it.[7] Bowles (1972) links this notion to the division of labor in society, commenting that: "the social division of labor based on the hierarchical structure of production gives rise to distinct class subcultures. The values, personality traits, and expectations characteristic of each subculture are transmitted from generation to generation through class differences in family socialization and complementary differences in the type and amount of schooling ordinarily attained by children of various class positions." The inclusion of the social class variable in this research attempts to take into

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[7] Melvin Kohn has made this point convincingly, in his book Class and Conformity; he demonstrates that middle class and lower class value orientations differ, at least in part because of their dissimilar occupational conditions.

account the normative variation found among or associated with levels of the stratification system.

The occupation of an adolescent's father may be conveniently employed as a measure of social class background. Limitations of this procedure, of course, must be recognized; in conjunction with occupational status are such factors as educational level, wealth and income, and style of life, which may together, or separately, have a greater bearing on the kinds of norms and values shared in the family.

In the present study, occupations were classified according to the Duncan "Socioeconomic Index for Occupations," (Duncan 1961). The Duncan scale (originally employing census data) ranks occupations by two objective criteria, education and income. These two dimensions of social class are especially relevant, since they are in keeping with our dual conception of the class effect; i.e., education serves as an indication of the intellectual (normative) climate of the home, and income reflects the availability of material resources to the family.[8] Both important dimensions come together in this particular scale, and the scale in effect suggests the family's life style.

Given the economic base of Ontonagon County, which leans toward copper mining and pu[illegible]elated industries, typical examples of numeric scores are: mining engineers 85, wood-choppers and paper mill laborers 4, farmers 14, carpenters 19, mining (operatives) 12, retail sales clerks 39, industrial foremen 44.

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[8] A parallel analysis was conducted employing a measure of father's education level; the results of this analysis show little variation from the results of the analysis to be presented in the following chapter using socioeconomic status (measured by the Duncan scale) as an indicant of a youngster's social class background. At all three points in time, and for boys as well as girls, SES and father's education level prove to be very highly correlated.

SES scores were collapsed into dichotomous form: scores of 25 and below were treated as "low SES" and scores above 25 were treated as "high SES." As can be seen from the few illustrative scores above, the "low SES" category includes largely manual occupations, and non-manual occupations are for the most part concentrated in the "high SES" category.

It is evident that the occupational structure in Ontonagon County has undergone dramatic changes since the initial phase of this project. In 1957/58, for example, only 31% of the youngsters came from white collar families. By 1968 the proportion of adolescents whose fathers were employed in the non-manual sector rose to 49% (at present, it is about 47%). This sharp increase in white collar occupations after 1957/58 is largely a consequence of a reduction in the segment of the population engaged in farming, and of an increase in the managerial and service occupations associated with the growth of the White Pine copper mine and with a general expansion of the pulp industry in the country.

Relationships with Parents

The quality of parent-child relationships (PCR), as perceived by the youngster is indexed by a nine-item summated Likert scale. Each item allows for responses in five categories from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Categories were subsequently collapsed into trichotomous form with the "undecided" category as a midpoint and each item scored from 1 through 3; aggregated scale scores ranged from 9 through 27.

The specific items are as follows:

a. It is hard for me to feel pleasant at home.

b. My parents try to understand my problems and worries.

c. As far as my ideas are concerned my parents and I live in two different worlds.

d. There is real love and affection for me at home.

e. My parents criticize me too much.

f. My friends have happier homes than I do.

g. Too often my parents compare me unfavorably with other children.

h. As I have known it, family life is happy.

i. My parents expect too much of me.

The possibility that these items reflect two or more dimensions was taken into consideration. A systematic analysis of the nine item inter-correlation matrix as well as a factor analysis (Singh 1975, p 37), and a standard item analysis, suggests that the set of items, for the most part, are derived from a similar universe of context and represent a unidimensional attribute space. Each item tends to be highly correlated with most of the others at all three points in time.

Given a high level of internal consistency, and the unidimensionality of the scale, a single item has been extracted and is believed to be particularly representative of the entire scale at all three points in time, viz., "As far as my ideas are concerned my parents and I live in two different worlds." Furthermore, this item perhaps more precisely than the others, taps the form of parent-child relationships conceptualized herein; i.e., the youngster's perception and acceptance of his parents expectations and value patterns. After much deliberation a label for this concept was arrived at, rejecting the familiar terminology often attached to the more traditional measures of interpersonal relationships such as solidarity, affectivity, alienation, and cohesiveness. The notion of "rapport" seems to convey rather accurately the unique element of the parent-child interactional system theoretically derived in this thesis and empirically captured by this item.

Employing the parental rapport variable as a measure of the parent-

child relationship, two categories were formed. Youngsters who "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with the "two-worlds" statement were classified as having high acceptance of their parents values and ideas; students who agreed, strongly agreed or who were undecided, comprise the category of individuals having negative parent-child relationships.

Record of Scholastic Performance

Academic achievement in school is measured by a student's grade point average ranking in his or her high school graduating class. Graduation rank was obtained from school records. (It should be noted, however, that graduation rank is derived from grade point averages midway through the senior year and, consequently, does not reflect any last term effort.) Graduation ranks were converted into percentile scores and coded as such. For present purposes, the percentile scores have been dichotomized; scores below the 50th percentile comprise the "low" category, and those in the 50th percentile and above make up the "high" category. I.Q. scores, too, were obtained via school records, but were excluded as a variable in this study for the simple reason that grades in school, unlike I.Q. scores, provide a measure of "achieved" status in school, and this achievement is here conceptualized as an early step in the process of upward educational mobility.

Sex

The idea that boys and girls undergo quite dissimilar socialization processes from a very young age, and particular with respect to expectations regarding social and occupational mobility, is highlighted in the first chapter of this thesis. Traditionally it has been expected, for example, that boys should go to college, pursue careers and become occupationally successful. For girls on the other hand, there has been far

less social pressure to achieve.[9] In view of the differences in the career patterns for the two sexes, and the probability that knowledge of such differences will add significantly to our understanding of the structuring of rural youth ambition, sex will be held constant throughout the major portion of the analysis as a "conditional" or "contextual" variable.

Formalization of a Conceptual Framework

The process of educational mobility is almost incalculably complex, regardless of the simplicity of one's research approach to it. It may be useful however to formalize the conceptual framework of this study, to the extent possible, at least in the hopes of rendering greater comprehensibility to the presentation and logic of the analysis. The study variables outlined above may be arranged in a sequence of interrelationships that indicates the theoretical flow of influence in the educational mobility process.

In essence I am proposing a "model," a modest attempt to specify these interrelationships, reflecting my conceptualization of how educational ambition (i.e., the decision to go on to college) is structured by a youngster's social class background, relationships with parents, and level of scholastic achievement. The sex factor is treated as a "condition" on the assumption that boys and girls experience somewhat different patterns of socialization especially in terms of the training necessary to prepare them for future occupational roles in society.

The model below illustrates the most plausible, causal arrangement of

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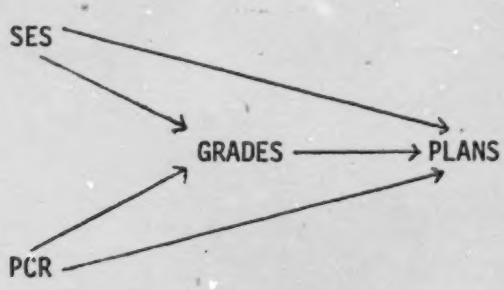
[9] There is evidence, however, that these traditional roles are changing, especially for women who in recent times have taken greater interest in seeking careers; "careers for women" has become a tenet of the women's liberation movement. We hope to capture structural changes of this nature within our longitudinal design.

these four variables. College plan (PLANS) is consequential to th other three variables in the model; the three paths leading to PLANS indicate these relationships. Socioeconomic status (SES) and parental rapport (PCR) are conceptually unrelated, and are introduced as independent variables in the model; each is temporally antecedent to youngsters' school performance and plans to attend college.[10] Grades are seen as an intervening variable that interprets the flow of influence originating within socioeconomic status and parental rapport.



It may be argued that although educational plans are in part accounted for by GRADES, early college plans may also encourage a youngster to achieve better grades in school, suggesting a reciprocal influence between GRADES and PLANS. I have chosen to place school performance before college plans in the model since a youngster may become a good student relatively early in his school years; in the United States, serious consideration of higher education probably does not occur until the later high school years.

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[10] It is conceivable that a youngster's performance in school could affect his or her relationships with parents. It is argued here, however, that the nature of PCR is determined by a wide spectrum of experiences with parents occuring over a relatively long period of time. GRADES therefore is seen more as a "reaction" to (or a correlate of) rather than a cause of the broader scope of experience in the family.

Briefly, the research strategy employed in this study aims to explore the changing patterns of educational mobility among rural youth. Three study populations of high school seniors have been drawn, spanning a time period of 17 years, and information has been gathered via questionnaires. Included in this chapter is a discussion of the conceptualization and operationalization of the key variables in this study. Finally, these variables have been arranged in a developmental sequence building up to the youngster's decision to further his or her academic education. The chapter to follow reports the analysis and findings of the research procedures outlined above.

The following inquiry begins by observing some basic distributional changes over time. Comparisons are made in terms of percentage differences and simple correlations. Elaboration analysis, relying especially on the "Lazarsfeld/Rosenberg paradigm" (Rosenberg 1968) is employed to investigate multivariate effects. In all cases, the strength of association is indicated by Yule's Q; and all statistical analyses are made by computer, using the "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences" (SPSS) (Nie, et al. 1975).

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The preceding chapter outlined the research strategy for this study and described, in brief, the study populations and the general social character of the communities from which these populations were drawn. Procedures for operationalizing the main variables were noted and an attempt was made to conceptualize the interrelationships of these variables within the framework of a formal model. For the purposes at hand, college plan is viewed as the dependent variable; social class origin and the quality of relationships between the high school student and his parents (as perceived by the student) are treated as independent variables; record of scholastic performance (graduation rank) is introduced as an intervening variable.

This chapter reports on the analytical procedures employed and the results. Findings are presented and discussed in terms of the structural patterning of educational opportunities at three points in time and by sex. Interpretations are offered with regard to the changing social, economic and cultural circumstances in this relatively isolated, relatively poor rural county of Michigan's upper peninsula. The primary focus throughout the inquiry has been, and is, on the 1974 cohort; the researcher is personally acquainted with some of these young people, has been able to discuss the situation with knowledgeable community leaders and feels more confident that interpretative statements of survey results are empirically grounded. The analysis and interpretation of survey data from the earlier two cohorts is basically aimed at exploring trends, sifting out patterns

of change leading up to the present situation, and establishing (within a longitudinal design framework) the stability and, consequently, the normative centrality of patterns derived from the attitudes, aspirations and circumstances of today's rural youth.

LONGITUDINAL PERSPECTIVES: THE STUDY VARIABLES OVER TIME

During the post-WWII era the American people witnessed many, and often dramatic, economic, technological and social changes. Some of these changes have had an enormous impact upon rural Michigan as upon rural areas elsewhere in the U.S.. Consequently, a college education has taken on a different meaning over the years and the normative patterns of influence among key determinants of the educational mobility process have likewise been subject to some change. In the pages to follow an attempt is made to capture these shifts as each study variable is traced through time, over a rapidly changing socio-historical context.

College Plan

Traditionally, the social pressures to get a college education and to pursue a professional career have been far stronger on boys than girls. This is the pattern reflected in 1957; 37% of the boys as compared with 29% of the girls planned to go to college (Table 1). By 1968 however, the traditional pattern showed signs of change as the proportion of girls planning on college was almost on a par with boys. During this decade, from 1957 to 1968, the prospect of attending a college or university was greatly inflated for both sexes. Expansion of the higher education system (throughout America and particularly in Michigan) and growing family incomes, permitted more youngsters than ever before to continue their schooling. Surprisingly, however, the traditional pattern of sexual inequality in educational mobility (reflected in the disproportionate number

of boys who normally planned on college), which seemed to have been eliminated by 1968, was reversed! Although 50% of the senior girls planned to go on, only 32% of the boys appeared to be interested in a college education. The large proportion of students planning on college in 1968 had been sustained through 1974 for girls but had waned radically

Table 1. Percentage of Seniors Planning to Attend College: Three Cohorts Compared.

	1957/58	1968	1974
Boys	37%	48%	32%
Girls	29%	52%	50%

for boys. The precise causes of this lessening of interest in college by Ontonagon County males are not clear; perhaps it is a temporary trend (or perhaps a national trend). It is likely however that any explanation should consider changes in the occupational structure of Ontonagon County, the severe nationwide economic recession of 1974, and perhaps also some normative changes in orientation patterns associated with sex roles. In the next section of this chapter some insight may be gained as to the nature of these changes by partialling out the college plans of 1974 boys and girls be the effects of socioeconomic status.

Socioeconomic Status

The social class structure in Ontonagon County is a dynamic one, as was suggested earlier. Since 1957 the proportion of occupations in the nonmanual sector has expanded substantially (Table 2). By classifying families in either "high" or "low" socioeconomic status categories according to a constant criterion, i.e., above or below and including a score of 26 on the Duncan scale of occupations (essentially a manual-nonmanual

split), I anticipate that percentage changes in the categories will be reflected in the way social class interrelates with college plans and scholastic performance. In other words, had the high-low social class

Table 2. Percentage from "High SES" Backgrounds: Three Cohorts Compared.

	1957/58	1968	1974
Boys	34%	47%	51%
Girls	29%	48%	47%

dividing line been shifted from one cohort to the next, simply to achieve an even empirical "split," it is likely that the influence of a changing class structure would go uncaptured. Consequently, the influence of a large manual (69%) and a relatively small nonmanual (31%) class in 1957/58 will not be glossed over.

Parent-Child Rapport

For boys and girls alike the direction of parental rapport is clearly identifiable. Over the years, relationships between youth and the adult generation have become progressively tenuous. In 1957 nearly 3/4 of the boys and girls perceived consensus between their parents' and their own ideas (Table 3). The prevailing atmosphere today seems to be remarkably less harmonious than it was in earlier years; by 1974 the proportion of young people who experienced high rapport with their parents dropped to not much greater than a half. This finding appears well within the bounds of much of the current literature asserting that large segments of the youth population are rejecting many norms and values of the "establishment."

Interestingly, the major changes in the way children get along with their parents came between 1957 and 1968 for girls, whereas for boys the greatest percentage change occurred from 1968 to 1974. This inconsistency

suggests: 1) that perhaps there are distinct sets of factors for boys and for girls operating to bring about changes, and 2) there may be dissimilar subgroups within the male and the female populations which are responsible for the differential rates of change.

Table 3. Percentage with High Parent-Child Rapport: Three Cohorts Compared.

	1957/58	1968	1974
Boys	70%	68%	56%
Girls	75%	58%	55%

Scholastic Performance

Cross-cultural as well as a considerable volume of U.S. research have demonstrated that girls tend to out-perform boys scholastically. This traditional pattern is evident from present observations as well. From 1957 through 1968, the upper half of the grade rankings were held 2/3 by girls and only 1/3 by boys (Table 4). Similarly there were twice as many boys as girls ranked in the lower half of their school classes. Since 1968 however some change appears to have taken place, diverging from the established pattern. In 1974 42% of the boys compared with 58% of the girls were classified in the "high grades" category; notably less disparate than the 2 to 1 margin characteristic of the two earlier graduating classes. Although the gap has narrowed in recent times, the pattern continues strong; girls get better grades than boys. Barring for the moment, the possibility that girls are simply more intellectually able than boys, it appears that the school system favors the early educational success of girls over boys. This issue is given further consideration at a later point in the analysis.

Table 4. Percentage Ranking High in Scholastic Performance: Three Cohorts Compared.

	1957/58	1968	1974
Boys	34%	32%	42%
Girls	65%	64%	58%

CHANGE PATTERNS: BIVARIATE INTERCORRELATIONS

In the preceding introductory section were discussed "inter-cohort" changes in the marginal distributions of rural youngsters' educational plans, social class backgrounds, relations with parents, and grade rankings. Findings revealed that there exists a fundamentally dynamic nature to the structural patterning of upward educational mobility, at least in the context of Ontonagon County. The purpose here is to explore the bivariate intercorrelations among the study variables over time. Principally interest is in explaining the college intentions of young people, taking class origin and parental rapport into account. Investigation of relative causal importance is conducted later on in this chapter by employing "elaboration" techniques of multivariate analysis.

Parent-Child Rapport and Socioeconomic Status

The theoretical conceptualization of the social class and PCR variables in this study assert that no causal relationship should exist between them. A non-causal association however, does not mean that SES and PCR will not be statistically correlated as a result of factors outside the realm of this thesis. The figure in Chapter II graphically expresses the hypothesized non-causal association between social class and parental rapport. The empirical results laid-out in Table 5 indicate that the two are not entirely uncorrelated and that very definite structural changes have taken place between each phase of the study.

For the 1957/58 case, negligible correlations are observed for boys and girls alike. Largely because of a reduction in the proportion of low SES boys in 1968 who interacted positively with their parents, a positive Q coefficient of moderate magnitude (.35) appears. Conversely, 1968 girls from the high SES category showed a significant loss of parental rapport, resulting in a negative and equally strong (-.35) association. Finally by 1974, a large proportion of the low SES girls had developed low rapport with their parents, similar to the high SES girls in 1968; this finding coupled with a general improvement in the parent-child rapport among high class girls, produced a positive correlation coefficient of .21. In 1974 the level of association for boys dropped slightly to .27, for the most part out of a decline in the volume of high class boys with positive PCR.

Table 5. Percentage with High Parent-Child Rapport by Socioeconomic Status: Three Cohorts Compared.

	% with High Parent-Child Rapport		
	Socioeconomic Status		
	Low SES	High SES	Q
Boys (1974)	49%	63%	.27
Boys (1968)	60%	76%	.35
Boys (1957/58)	71%	69%	-.04
Girls (1974)	49%	60%	.21
Girls (1968)	67%	49%	-.35
Girls (1957/58)	75%	76%	.04

Given a noncausal relationship between PCR and SES, interpretation of these changing structures must originate from outside the "model" under consideration. I hypothesize that the exceptionally low percentage of high class girls in 1968 who felt consensus with their parents' ideas, was derived from an attempt by these girls to conform to the changing normative structures of society at large and an initial rejection of these normative changes by the parents. Unlike the girls in 1957/58, the high SES girls in 1968 had broader and very untraditional interests and inflated ambitions; the percentage of girls who felt a college education would be an essential step in their careers rose from 29% to 52% in the decade following the initial phase of this project. The mothers and fathers of these young girls however, may have had considerable reluctance to accept the new ideas of their daughters', having been socialized along more traditional lines themselves. The same parent-child conflict did not become manifest for the low class girls until some years later; by 1974 the proportion of low SES girls whose ideas were in accordance with their parents' had fallen from 67% in 1968 to a record low of 49%.

High SES girls in 1974 showed increased consensus with their parents, indicating greater acceptance by mothers and fathers of the newly adopted norms and values of their children. I suspect that in the near future, similar acceptance will come about on the part of lower class parents. I believe that negative parent-child relationships occurred initially among high class families and then among low SES families for two reasons: first, because high SES girls tend to have earlier knowledge of new ideas (norms, social attitudes, etc.), as expressed in current "knowledge gap" literature (Tichenor 1970), and second, because the low class girls have in the past (1957) been tightly woven into the traditional female roles,

thereby developing a comparatively strong resistance to change.

In the case of the low class boys, the proportion indicating positive parental relations, showed a substantial decline in 1968. In contrast, high class boys perceived increased consensus with parents during the period from 1957/58 to 1968. Again, assuming no causal association between SES and PCR, I postulate that the association in 1968 (.35) is dependent upon one or more unmeasured factors. My conjecture at this point is that concomitant escalation of the war in Vietnam and greater demands on the part of the selective service system, generated a clash of values between lower class parents and their sons. The traditional expectation of parents is for young men to serve their country in time of crisis. Intolerance of opposition to this expectation may be especially likely to occur among lower class parents. The anti-war movement was also at this time especially popular among young people in the U.S., in fact, resistence to the war became the norm within the more radical segments of the population. If this explanation is correct, then one might also expect that a greater proportion of boys in 1968 planned to enter college after graduation; college enrollment at that time provided at least a temporary exemption from the draft. Furthermore, if this be the case, one should also discover that college plans are less a function of socioeconomic status, parental relations, and of academic achievement, since low SES boys, boys with negative PCR and boys with low grade standings in 1968 may have opted to go to college in order to escape military service.

Socioeconomic Status and College Plan

In 1974 the effect of social class background on the college plans of rural youth was considerable for girls, and especially so for boys (Table 6). Although as high as 42% of the low class girls had intentions to enter

college in the fall the following year, 60% of the high SES girls planned on college. The relatively high proportions of high and low class girls who planned to seek higher education was in sharp contrast to that of the boys; where 45% of the high SES boys, and a mere 18% of the low SES boys had college expectations in 1974.

Table 6. Percentage Planning to Attend College by Socioeconomic Status: Three Cohorts Compared.

	% Planning College		
	Socioeconomic Status		
	Low SES	High SES	Q
Boys (1974)	18%	45%	.57
Boys (1968)	46%	50%	.08
Boys (1957/58)	32%	48%	.32
Girls (1974)	42%	60%	.35
Girls (1968)	50%	55%	.10
Girls (1957/58)	24%	42%	.40

The occupational structure in Ontonagon County is geared toward traditional patterns of employment. The vast majority of jobs are open to the male half of the population only; mining, woods work and other pulp related industries are just a few examples. Traditional expectations for women have been to get married and to bring up a family, while husbands worked in the mine, in the woods, or on the farm. In 1957 it is possible to catch a glimpse of these patterns, where a greater proportion of boys than of girls were educationally mobile. Also at this time, the social class effect was stronger for girls than for boys. Going to college for a girl in those days was characteristically an upper class

phenomenon. A high class girl experienced relatively greater pressures to go to college since for her, college was part of her "finishing" or an appropriate place to "find a husband."

By 1968 the traditional career patterns for girls and boys after graduation had been shattered. Low SES students were nearly as likely to seek a college education as high SES students, and the quantity of girls with college intentions had surpassed the number of boys. Economic prosperity throughout the 1960's enabled even the lower social levels to realize their educational aspirations, and the general acceptance of the "achievement oriented female" has encouraged increasing numbers of girls to go to college and pursue professional careers.

It is because the occupational structure in Ontonagon County has been unable to change along side rapid developments in the structuring of career opportunities of women, that educational inequalities were evident in 1974. My hypothesis is that the substantial increase of females headed for college, above the number of males, was largely because of the relatively few jobs available for girls in the county, therefore they viewed college as a "way out." By entering college a young girl is able to broaden her occupational horizons, acquire valuable skills and "escape" the structural barriers that surround women within the county.

Social class background in 1974, too, was an important determinant of the educational plans of girls and especially of boys. It is my conjecture that the economic recession which seemed well on the upswing in the spring of 1974, was felt more severely by low SES families than by high SES families in Ontonagon County. Tight family resources appear to have been of greater consequence for the low class boys than for the low class girls, where only 18% of the former and a comparatively overwhelming 42% of the latter saw higher education as a probable course for the future.

Yet low SES boys differ from low class girls in that, for boys the decision to go to college is less crucial than it is for girls. A low class boy who is discouraged from staying in school because of the scarcity of funds in the family, may easily slip into the existing occupational structure, picking up a job in the White Pine mine, in the pulp industry, or in one of several other manual positions. A low SES girl on the other hand does not have the same employment option to fall back on; in order to find work she must leave the county, one established way out is via a college education.

As expected, an unusually high proportion (46%) of low class boys in 1968 expressed intentions to continue their schooling in the following year. In so doing, these individuals reduced the coefficient of correlation to a nearly negligible level. Not only may this have occurred as a response to the prospects of accompanying the military in Southeast Asia, but also because the economic prosperity of the times permitted and encouraged the continuation of academic training.

Parent-Child Rapport and College Plan

The discussion of past research in the opening chapter of this thesis, suggested controversial interpretations of the effect of youngsters' parental relationships on their educational intentions. Some studies have demonstrated that a positive family milieu leads to high aspirations and achievement, while other research lends support to the "family deprivation-aspirations hypothesis."

Present findings, summarized in Table 7, support neither camp for the 1957/58 and 1968 cohorts; these students were no more likely to seek further education if they had high rapport with their parents than if their parental rapport was low. The only exception was among the 1968 boys, where a weak and negative (-.22) association appeared. Accounting for this correlation

was disproportionately large percentage (55%) of boys in the "low rapport" category who planned to enter college in the fall. Earlier findings (see Table 6) have shown that in 1968, the increased percentage of college bound boys were from low class backgrounds, and that those from low SES families tended to be at odds with their parents (see Table 5).

Table 7. Percentage Planning to Attend College by Parent-Child Rapport: Three Cohorts Compared.

	% Planning College		
	Parent-Child Rapport		
	Low Rapport	High Rapport	Q
Boys (1974)	25%	38%	.29
Boys (1968)	55%	44%	-.22
Boys (1957/58)	35%	38%	.06
Girls (1974)	44%	55%	.22
Girls (1968)	[illegible]	55%	.12
Girls (1957/58)	28%	30%	.04

In other words, the proportion of boys planning to go to college increased dramatically from 1957/58 to 1968. Those who made up this increase, were largely lower class boys, who experienced low rapport with their parents. Most assuredly, these findings are in keeping with the "military-aspirations" hypothesis. If my reasoning is correct, then I might hypothesize that in 1968, PCR had a notably weaker effect on college plans, especially for low class boys.

Since 1968, even more interesting changes came about regarding the influence of PCR. For girls the association became slightly stronger (.22) due to a lower percentage of college bound girls in the "low rapport"

category. The boys in 1974, on the other hand underwent a complete turn-around with respect to the influence of parental relations: where in 1968 college bound boys tended to perceive estrangement from their parents, in 1974 those who felt positively toward their parents tended to develop college orientations. Why the sudden reversal? Because many of those individuals in the "low rapport" category in 1968, whom I hypothesized to be from low SES backgrounds, elected in 1974 not to pursue college degrees. During the time period stretching from 1968 to 1974, the proportion of males with low PCR who planned to attend college dropped from an all-time high of 55% to a record breaking low of 25%. Accounting for this dramatic switch, I believe, is the effective termination of the United States military draft in 1973.

Again I hypothesize that just as it was the low SES boys in 1968 who brought the percentage up to 55%, it was the low SES boys in 1974, still characterized by low parent-child rapport, who by their choice not to go to college, reduced the percentage to 25%. If my reasoning is correct for the 1974 cohort, then I would expect that PCR had a positive effect on college plans, especially for the low class boys.

Scholastic Performance and College Plan

The importance of young boys' and girls' grade standings on their educational plans was introduced in earlier chapters. Findings of this study too, show that scholastic performance has considerable bearing in the Ontonagon County context (Table 8). For girls, grades in school has been a continuing, strong determinant of college plans. College bound boys on the other hand, appear to have become less dependent upon grade rankings over time, albeit the GRADES-PLANS correlation coefficients are rather strong in all cases.

Percentage changes indicate that decline in the importance of class

rank in 1968 came as a consequence of a significantly large increase in the proportion of boys with low grades who elected to pursue college careers. Since the major increase in the volume of boys planning college was largely among boys from low class families, and low SES boys in 1968 also tended to get low grades, then it is quite possible that this group

Table 8. Percentage Planning to Attend College by Scholastic Performance: Three Cohorts Compared.

	% Planning College		
	Scholastic Performance		
	Low Grades	High Grades	Q
Boys (1974)	17%	52%	.68
Boys (1968)	31%	83%	.83
Boys (1957/58)	16%	79%	.90
Girls (1974)	27%	64%	.64
Girls (1968)	30%	65%	.63
Girls (1957/58)	16%	37%	.51

of boys is responsible for reducing the dependence of PLANS on GRADES. Elaboration by social class in a future stage of analysis will answer this question. As expected, these data too support the "military-aspirations" hypothesis.

Further decline in the association between educational plans and scholastic performance in 1974, stems for the most part from a 31% drop in the number of boys with high grades who had college plans. Scarcity of family financial resources in 1974 appears to have heightened the influence of social class while at the same time lowered the need for high grades among educationally mobile boys.

It might be expected that the effect of scarce resources on college plans would be different for high and low SES groups. For low class boys, who are universally affected by a tight economy, grades may become a more powerful determinant. High SES boys on the other hand are likely to demonstrate relatively less dependence on scholastic performance since the financial burden would be relatively less severe. Among high class boys in 1974, a youngster might easily afford to go to college no matter what his grade rank was, thereby diluting the influence of scholastic performance.

Socioeconomic Status and Scholastic Performance

Viewing high school grade standing as a preliminary step in the educational mobility process, I suspect that socioeconomic status affects GRADES much as it influences college plans. In point of fact, the data demonstrate that similarities in trends of influence do indeed exist. Associations between SES and GRADES, however, are generally of a lower magnitude than SES-PLANS relationships. Perhaps this differential originates out of a greater emphasis placed by parents, on the value of a college education, compared to the importance of academic success in high school.

For girls and boys alike (Table 9), in 1957/58 the influence of social class on academic achievement (grade standing), was rather weak, yet in a positive direction. By 1968 the association was on the upswing for boys because of a reduced percentage of low SES boys who ranked in the top half of the graduating class. Largely because of a drop in the performance of high class girls, and a betterment in the grades of low SES girls, the effect of SES on GRADES was sent in a negative direction, still not of great magnitude. Only fractional changes showed up by 1974; because of the inability of the low class girls to maintain their high grade standing, the negative association diminished, and for boys the influence of SES made slight gains. One interesting point is the fact that a corresponding drop

in the percentage of low SES girls with positive parental relations occurred between 1968 and 1974; suggesting that perhaps there was an empirical connection between the two percentage changes.

Table 9. Percentage Ranking "High" on Scholastic Performance by Socioeconomic Status: Three Cohorts Compared.

	% Ranking "High" on Scholastic Performance		
	Socioeconomic Status		
	Low SES	High SES	Q
Boys (1974)	35%	49%	.29
Boys (1968)	27%	38%	.25
Boys (1957/58)	32%	38%	.14
Girls (1974)	60%	57%	-.06
Girls (1968)	70%	57%	-.28
Girls (1957/58)	63%	71%	.18

At face value these findings lead to the conclusion that socioeconomic status is not a particularly powerful determinant of youngsters' school achievement. Logically however, one cannot stop at this point, as it has been hypothesized that SES bears its strongest influence under high rapport conditions in the home, and less so in an absence of parental rapport. So before dismissing social class as an unimportant determinant of GRADES, it is necessary to examine its explanatory power under the controlled effect of parent-child rapport.

Parent-Child Rapport and Scholastic Performance

As anticipated, the effect of PCR on the academic rankings of youngsters' is not unlike the influence of parental rapport on college plans. Generally speaking, parent-child relationships and scholastic performance

are unrelated (Table 10). A moderate increase in 1968 and a 15% decrease in 1974 of the proportion of girls in the "low rapport" category, characterized by high grade standings, account for the fluctuation in the levels of association.

Table 10. Percentage Ranking "High" on Scholastic Performance by Parent-Child Rapport: Three Cohorts Compared.

	% Ranking "High" on Scholastic Performance by Parent-Child Rapport		
	Low Rapport	High Rapport	Q
Boys (1974)	43%	41%	-.04
Boys (1968)	31%	33%	.04
Boys (1957/58)	32%	35%	.05
Girls (1974)	46%	69%	.45
Girls (1968)	61%	67%	.13
Girls (1957/58)	56%	68%	.25

For boys little change seems to have occurred in the percentages ranking high in their school classes even while taking parental rapport into account. In all cases, roughly a third of the boys had high scholastic achievement. By 1974 some change had come about, as these boys raised their proportion in the upper scholastic ranks to over 40%.

Summary of Basic Intercorrelations

Up to now, to summarize, this chapter has dealt with general marginal and bivariate analyses of our four study variables at three points in time. Out of these analyses several distinctive empirical findings have emerged. Socioeconomic status has proven to be a rather important determinant of educational intentions of Ontonagon County youth. Traditional expectations

for these boys and girls appear to have undergone remarkable changes in the past decade. Girls and low class youngsters have become equally as likely to seek higher education as boys and high class youngsters, given sufficient financial backing for all, (such was somewhat more the case in 1968). Because of a male oriented occupational structure in Ontonagon County, girls are forced to leave the area to meet society's new expectations of "the career oriented female; " one major route out (and up) is through college.

To generalize about the influence of social class during the period 1957/58 to 1968 for girls, one must look at high and low class girls separately. By 1968 low SES girls felt only slightly more estranged from their parents, where high SES girls perceived exceptionally wide disagreement between their own and their parents ideas. Low class girls demonstrated higher grade rankings as the scholastic performance of high SES girls worsened. Finally, the heightened college plans of low SES girls far exceeded the rise in the plans of high class girls.

During the time period from 1968 to 1974, percentage differences show that the social class effect made a full reversal. Parent-child rapport plummeted for low class girls, where girls from high SES backgrounds enjoyed better relations with their parents. Regarding scholastic performance in 1974, low SES girls fell in rank while the high class girls did not. Lastly, as the college intentions of girls from high SES families continued to rise, the growth of the college plans of low class girls terminated and reversed.

These developments in the career ambitions of young rural girls, as I have suggested, stem from a conglomeration of external factors. Briefly some these causes may be: 1) a predominately male oriented occupational structure in Ontonagon County, 2) general economic prosperity in 1968, and

economic recession in 1974, 3) an expanded higher educational system in the U.S., 4) initial parental rejection of the new societal career expectations which young rural girls have attempted to conform, 5) gradual acceptance of these normative changes by parents, and 6) differential rates of change for high and low class girls.

The boys in Ontonagon County experienced the effects of socioeconomic status and of parent-child rapport on educational success even more severely than did the girls, and through a markedly different process. The college plans of "low rapport" boys underwent a sharp increase in 1968 and an equally noticeable decline by 1974. It was hypothesized that since 1) a similar growth and decline was observed among college-bound boys from low SES backgrounds, and 2) in both 1968 and 1974, boys lacking parental rapport tended to come from low class families, then the above changes may be partly accounted for by the group of low SES boys who, in 1968 were financially able, and in 1974 financially unable to seek a college education. More important however, these changes may be explained by the utility of college enrollment as a way of postponing induction into the armed forces. The educational system acts as an "escape mechanism" for girls on the one hand from the social and economic confinements in Ontonagon County, and for boys on the other from the demands of the selective service system.

The role of scholastic performance in explaining the educational intentions of these youths is substantial. Among girls, grades have remained a strong determinant of college plans at all three points in time. The declining influence of grade ranking for boys, may be accounted for by two major percentage changes. In 1968 the effect was reduced by the greater proportion of boys with low grades who had college plans. I have hypothesized that these boys are: 1) characteristically from low SES families

which are able to put aside funds for college, during times of general economic affluence, and 2) individuals who are going to college to avoid the draft. A dramatic drop in the percentage of college-bound boys with high scholastic standings accounts for further decline in the influence of GRADES. My conjecture is that the percentage drop is experienced mainly among boys who can not afford a college education during times of economic recession, and who are no longer "threatened" by the military service.

The basic intercorrelations between socioeconomic status and grades in school are for the most part rather weak. Yet this finding cannot be taken at face value, as it may be that parental rapport has "suppressed" its true impact; in the following section support for such postulation is sought.

Regarding percentage changes within the female population, a decline in academic achievement of young low class girls in 1974, coupled with corresponding reductions in 1) the level of parental rapport among low SES girls, and 2) the level of school performance among girls with low parental rapport, points to a common cause in explaining these basic intercorrelations.

Basic intercorrelations between parent-child rapport and grades in school are not altogether very revealing. For boys, no associations of any significant magnitude were turned up for any of the three cohorts. For girls, a weak association in 1957/58 and a moderately strong relationship in 1968 were found; both are in a positive direction. In terms of percentage changes, the greatest instability was in the "low rapport" category for girls and also for boys.

In the next phase of this chapter my aim is to elaborate by controls on the interrelationships among social class, parental relations, grade

standing and college plans. Direct and indirect effects are explored, and assumptions emerging from the bivariate analysis are tested.

INFLUENCE STRUCTURES: ELABORATION BY CONTROLS

The basic intercorrelations covered to this point have revealed a radical departure from the traditonal structuring of career orientations of rural youth. In this section, multivariate analyses are undertaken in three stages, commencing with the combined effects of socioeconomic status and parent-child rapport on plans to go to college. The second stage presents and discusses the ways in which social class and parental rapport condition the influence of one another on scholastic performance. Third, the intervening effects of GRADES on the SES-PLANS and PCR-PLANS relationships are explored.

Conditional Effects of Socioeconomic Status and Parent-Child Rapport and College Plan

Through the bivariate analyses presented in the last section, it was learned that a youngster's educational mobility is to a large extent, governed by his socioeconomic background, and to a significant, although lesser degree, determined by the nature of his family relationships. Furthermore, it is known that the association between social class origin and parent-child rapport varies over time. Given these basic intercorrelations, the focus of interpretation involves the conditional effects of PCR on the SES-PLANS relationship, and of SES on the PCR-PLANS relationship. First I shall consider the influence of social class on the educational expectations of youth while controlling on PCR.

By introducing parent-child relationships as a test variable (Table 11), the originally rather strong relationship of .57 for boys in 1974, was "specified" so that the association became even stronger for boys characterized

Table 11 Percentage Planning to Attend College, by Socioeconomic Status and Parent-Child Rapport: Three Cohorts Compared.

% Planning College

	Parent-Child Rapport: Low Rapport			Parent-Child Rapport: High Rapport		
	Socioeconomic Status: Low SES	High SES	Q	Low SES	High SES	Q
Boys (1974)	12% (25)	42% (19)	.68	25% (24)	47% (32)	.45
Boys (1968)	58% (19)	50% (10)	-.16	38% (29)	50% (32)	.24
Boys (1957/58)	25% (24)	54% (13)	.56	35% (58)	45% (29)	.21
Girls (1974)	37% (27)	53% (19)	.31	46% (26)	64% (28)	.35
Girls (1968)	44% (18)	52% (25)	.15	53% (36)	58% (24)	.11
Girls (1957/58)	22% (23)	44% (09)	.48	25% (69)	41% (29)	.37

by low parental rapport, while the college plans of boys with high PCR became less dependent upon socioeconomic status. Earlier in this chapter, through the observation of percentage changes from 1968 to 1974, it was postulated that just such a conditional effect would turn up.

In essence, my arguement asserts that since low SES boys in 1974 tended to have adverse relationships with their parents, the sharp decline of college-bound boys from low SES families would have occurred for the most part among boys in the "low rapport" category. This occurrence was expected, in turn, to result in a stronger SES-PLANS association for boys with low PCR, and a weaker association for those experiencing more favorable parent-child relationships. Indeed, this interpretation is supported, noting a 46% decline in the proportion of low SES, college-bound boys in the "low rapport" category.

A similar empirical "split" appeared, among the 1957/58 cohort reaffirming that socioeconomic status is an important determinant of college plans, especially for adolescent boys who do not "get along" with their parents. For the 1968 male cohort however, there was an obvious inconsistency with the other two cohorts; the "specification" was reversed. Youngsters who were the least likely to pursue higher education in 1957/58 and in 1974, (i.e., low SES boys with negative PCR), had the highest college plans of all in 1968! This finding of course was anticipated, as it conforms to the earlier empirical hypothesis that such would occur due to greater availability of financial resources in the family, and strong opposition to the Viet Nam War by a large and growing segment of American youth.

Assuming that the present interpretation of inconsistent findings in 1968 is an accurate one, there exists a relatively stable set of relationships over time. An increasingly powerful influence of social class was

exerted on the college plans of young men who perceive high rapport with their parents by comparison to their "low rapport" counterparts. This finding suggests that perhaps the present measure of parent-child rapport does not, as was believed, exert a regulative effect on the passage of social class norms and values from parents to children. It is evident that PCR transmits a form of normative influence outside of the social class configuration. The initial contention of this thesis is that the normative influence of socioeconomic status would be regulated by the nature of the parent-child rapport; SES was expected to exert its strongest influence under the high PCR condition. Empirically however, this hypothesis is not supported; in fact, these data show quite the reverse of what I originally projected.

The implication is that PCR allows the passage of normative encouragement instrumental to the educational achievement and ambitions of youngsters yet independent of, and in the same manner as the influence of social class. Parent-child rapport acts as a supportive mechanism, helping youngsters cope with and meet the demands of the system. A youngster who experiences generally favorable interaction with his parents gains greater knowledge and acceptance of the rewards and opportunities in society, on the one hand, and is given the encouragement to use these opportunities and seek these rewards on the other.

Table 11 demonstrates this notion, especially as it applies to the low SES boys. The college plans of high class boys were relatively unchanged by the introduction of PCR; being of high social status was enough to stress the importance of college for these boys. At all three points in time the proportion of college bound boys from high SES families, was in the neighborhood of 45% - 50%. For low class boys, however, the influence of PCR is crucial. Since the low SES youngster does not have the

level of normative encouragement characteristically passed along in the high class families, his only form of support lies in the relationships he has with his parents. Consider, for example, the low SES boys in 1974, these boys were better than twice as likely to go on to college if their parental rapport was high, than if it was low. To the low class boy, who lacks even the general support of his parents, the option to pursue a college education is seldom chosen.

It was discovered earlier that the trend of social class influence on the educational plans of boys, was closely followed by the trend for girls. Briefly, the effect of SES was moderate in 1957/58 and in 1974, but in 1968, dropped off to an almost negligible level. In contrast to the boys' case, however, introduction of parent-child rapport as a test variable offered little in the way of additional explanation of the college plans of girls. At all three points in time the partial Q coefficients approximated the zero-order level of association. While the parental support factor is an important mechanism to educational success for boys, particularly those from low class backgrounds, positive parental support is of no greater consequence for the low SES girls than for the high SES girls.

Turning now to the generally weak impact of parental rapport on college plans, by controlling on socioeconomic status, the conditional effects of PCR and SES may again be observed (Table 12). It was reasoned in the last section that parental rapport would have a stronger positive influence on PLANS for the low SES boys than for the high SES boys, except in 1968 when an unusually high proportion of low class boys with low parental rapport made plans to continue their schooling. The findings show, indeed, that such was the case. A disproportionately high (58%) level of low SES, college-bound boys from the two worlds category in 1968,

Table 12 Percentage Planning to Attend College, by Parent-Child Rapport and Socioeconomic Status: Three Cohorts Compared.

% Planning College

	Socioeconomic Status					
	Low SES			High SES		
	Parent-Child Rapport					
	Low Rapport	High Rapport	Q	Low Rapport	High Rapport	Q
Boys (1974)	12% (25)	25% (24)	.42	42% (19)	47% (32)	.10
Boys (1968)	58% (19)	38% (29)	-.38	50% (10)	50% (32)	.00
Boys (1957/58)	25% (24)	35% (58)	.22	54% (13)	45% (29)	-.18
Girls (1974)	37% (27)	46% (26)	.19	53% (19)	64% (28)	.24
Girls (1968)	44% (18)	53% (36)	.17	52% (25)	58% (24)	.13
Girls (1957/58)	22% (23)	25% (69)	.08	44% (09)	41% (29)	-.06

distort what would otherwise be a rather consistent trend in the data. Taking this into account, further support is given to the above generalizations that: 1) the class related norms and values surrounding males from high class backgrounds, provide sufficient impetus to maintain the volume of college plans regardless of how well they get along with their parents, and 2) there is an absence of aspirant norms passed on in low class families, therefore positive parental relations become an instrumental font of normative encouragement, albeit far more diffuse and undirected than forms of encouragement commonly associated with the social class configuration, (e.g., "parental stress on college," "parental encouragement," "perceived parental interest," etc.).

The initially rather insubstantial PCR-PLANS associations for girls were, at all three points in time, unaffected by the introduction of social class. These findings corroborate the earlier discovery that a girl who experienced favorable parental relationships was no more likely to have come from a low class home than a high class home. Regarding the trend of associations, the impact of parental relations appears to be steadily gaining for low SES and high SES girls alike.

For boys, the norms and values acquired in the family are an important part of the development of career orientations. The passage of norms stressing educational and occupational success has been a social phenomenon characteristically experienced in the high socioeconomic status families. Girls, on the other hand, have traditionally been given less exposure to the norms of success. As suggested earlier, the influence of social class for girls stems from the expectations high SES parents have for their daughters, typically emphasizing the social value of education or the need for young girls to receive a "finishing," rather than the importance of becoming educationally and occupationally "successful."

The additional support obtained via positive parental relations is valuable to young males since it too, is directed toward an achievement orientation; high rapport is essential to the educational success of low class boys who lack the kind of normative exposure and financial resources located in the high class families. Given that girls do not have the traditional social class influence commonly experienced by boys, the support gained by high rapport with parents does not enhance the educational mobility for low SES girls any more than for high class girls.

The point being made here is that for girls, in the past, there has never been the expectation of educational or occupational "success," by parents or by society at large. Through the 1960's and into the 1970's however the career aspirations of women have grown, and society's expectations for women have expanded accordingly; evidence for this is shown simply by the high proportion of college-bound females. Parental support for the aspirations of young women, not being of a traditional (class) nature is manifest in the way parents and daughters interact. The normative encouragement of achievement orientations for girls is expressed in a diffuse form, through parental relationships. This conclusion is reflected in the increasing explanatory power of PCR regarding the college plans of girls, over time and at high and low social class levels.

Conditional Effects of Socioeconomic Status and Parent-Child Rapport on Scholastic Performance

In the preceding section it was discovered that for boys, social class exerts its greatest influence in families characterized by negative interrelationships; college plans of girls, are determined by SES regardless of how well daughters get along with their parents. Regarding the influence of parental rapport while controlling on SES, a

conditional effect again appears for boys, where the strongest PCR-PLANS associations turn up among boys from low class backgrounds. Parental relations also affect the educational plans of girls, even while taking SES into account.

The purpose of the present section is to explore the interrelated effects of social class and parental rapport on scholastic performance. As an early indicant of educational success, it is likely that PCR and SES condition the effects of one another on grades in school, as they have on college plans. The first relationship to be observed is that between socioeconomic status and GRADES while controlling on parental relations.

The zero-order correlations between SES and GRADES, for boys, have been shown to be moderately weak at all three points in time. Introducing parent-child rapport as a test variable, the conditions under which a youngster's high school grade rank is most highly determined by his social class background are identified (Table 13). With the exception of the 1968 cohort,[11] lacking the support of parents put low class youngsters at a marked disadvantage to those from high class families and to those who had positive interaction with their parents; this finding was especially outstanding in 1974 where only 20% of the low class boys who experienced low parental rapport were ranked in the top half of their school class. There was another interesting dynamic however, in 1974 (and to a far lesser extent in 1957) among the high class boys. Where the low SES boy gained in academic achievement, (as well as in educational plan), from the support of his parents, the high SES boy was restricted,

[11] The reliability of the Q coefficient in the "low-rapport" category in 1968 (-.04) is low, given the small number of high SES cases (10).

Table 13 Percentage Ranking "High" on Scholastic Performance, by Socioeconomic Status and Parent-Child Rapport: Three Cohorts Compared.

% Ranking "High" on Scholastic Performance

	Parent-Child Rapport: Low Rapport			Parent-Child Rapport: High Rapport		
	Socioeconomic Status: Low SES	High SES	Q	Low SES	High SES	Q
Boys (1974)	20% (25)	74% (19)	.84	50% (24)	34% (32)	-.31
Boys (1968)	32% (19)	30% (10)	-.04	24% (29)	41% (32)	.37
Boys (1957/58)	29% (24)	39% (13)	.21	33% (58)	38% (29)	.11
Girls (1974)	52% (27)	37% (19)	-.30	69% (26)	71% (28)	.05
Girls (1968)	72% (18)	52% (25)	-.41	69% (36)	63% (24)	-.15
Girls (1957/58)	48% (23)	78% (09)	.58	68% (69)	69% (29)	.02

performing exceptionally better in school when he and his parents were not getting along (74%).

In low class families, the expectations for youngsters to do well in school are rather atypical by comparison to high SES families. The pressure to get good grades is weak, and where parental relations are strong, the normative support of parents is most keen. High parent-child rapport may also be enhanced by a superior performance on the part of the youngster, implying a mutually reinforcing association between the two. Unexpected school achievement by children, on the one hand, and positive reactions by parents, on the other, are equally compelling rewards for low class parents and children to sustain this form of interaction. (In this sense, PCR is seen as a "source of " rather than a "condition for" normative parental influence.)

Unlike the low SES youngsters, high class boys are generally expected to demonstrate superior performance in school, therefore, the attainment of high grades is not an uncommon occurance, and is not given the positive reinforcement found in low class families. Although high SES boys in Ontonagon County did tend to achieve high grades in school, the amount of pressure exerted by parents, (to get high grades, but more to "be successful" and to "get ahead" in general), appears to have had the unanticipated consequence of alienating these boys from their parents. For this reason, high class boys who got along well with their parents, did not also tend to show exceptionally high achievement in school.

Regarding the girls' situation the initial absence of any substantial GRADES-SES association at all three points in time was shown to be spurious when controlling for parent-child rapport. Consistently, girls who experienced high rapport with their parents, remained unaffected by their social class backgrounds. Among girls in the "low rapport"

control category, noteworthy differences arose at all three points in time. In 1974 and 1968, girls who ranked high scholastically yet who did not have high parental rapport, tended to be from low SES families. The only exception to this pattern was in 1957/58, where girls of high class origin tended to be ranked in the upper half of their class.[12]

Thus far, observation has been made of the interrelated effects of socioeconomic status and parent-child rapport on the scholastic performance of youngsters, viewing SES as the independent variable and controlling on parental rapport. Essentially the findings show that social class influenced grade standings only under certain conditions specified by parent-child rapport, for boys as well as for girls, and most notably among the 1974 cohort. To give further insight into the ways in which SES and PCR structure scholastic rankings of these young people, Table 14 highlights the social class and family effects on GRADES, this time viewing SES as the test factor.

Again, for boys and girls largely in the 1974 cohort, conditional effects emerged. For boys, the original null relationship (-.04) between grades in school and parental relations was shown to be a spurious association. Socioeconomic status in this case acted as a suppressor of the true "compensating influences" of PCR on GRADES. These findings only serve to reaffirm the earlier discovery that: high parent-child rapport is essential to the educational success of low SES boys, since high PCR facilitates exposure to and acceptance of the diffuse form of normative parental support. Also it was pointed out that PCR and GRADES, for the low class boys, may be mutually rewarding to the parents and children concerned. High class boys, on the other hand, perform most ably when

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[12] The small number of cases (9) in the "high SES-low rapport" category, however, puts into question the reliability of this association.

Table 14 Percentage Ranking "High" on Scholastic Performance, by Parent-Child Rapport and Socioeconomic Status : Three Cohorts Compared.

% Ranking "High" on Scholastic Performance

	Socioeconomic Status					
	Low SES			High SES		
	Parent-Child Rapport					
	Low Rapport	High Rapport	Q	Low Rapport	High Rapport	Q
Boys (1974)	20% (25)	50% (24)	.60	74% (19)	34% (32)	-.68
Boys (1968)	32% (19)	24% (29)	-.18	30% (10)	41% (32)	.23
Boys (1957/58)	29% (24)	33% (58)	.08	39% (13)	38% (29)	-.01
Girls (1974)	52% (27)	69% (26)	.35	37% (19)	71% (28)	.62
Girls (1968)	72% (18)	69% (36)	-.07	52% (25)	63% (24)	.21
Girls (1957/58)	48% (23)	68% (69)	.40	78% (09)	69% (29)	-.22

they are at odds with their parents. The implication of this finding is that the pressure and high expectations of educational success, held by high SES parents for their sons, do indeed result in an inflated school performance level, while at the same time cause the unanticipated effects of negative parent-child relationships.

Among the 1974 girls, the original PCR-GRADES association of .45 was "split" when the social class effect was taken into account. This finding is wholly supportive of the earlier conclusion that parent-child rapport was important to the educational success of 1974 girls in general, and to high class girls in particular. As in the case of low SES boys, parental expectations of educational success was weak for girls. Consequently, where parent-child rapport was high, girls and low class boys were given the support necessary to achieve high academic rankings. Only in the case of the high SES boys did the pressure exerted by parents to do well in school, jeopardize the parent-child relationship.

To sum up the findings in the present section, it was found that socioeconomic status and parent-child rapport are significant features, separately as well as interrelatedly, in the process of educational mobility of youth in Ontonagon County. Scholastic performance and educational plans represent two important sequential steps in the development of this process. Important to the notion of a developmental sequence, is the finding that SES and PCR influence academic advancement in school, much in the way as they affect the decision to pursue a college career.

It has been demonstrated, for example, that low class boys in 1974 who lacked high parent-child rapport, were far less likely to plan to go to college or to rank in the upper half of their class, than low SES

boys who did experience favorable parental rapport. For the low class boys, and to a lesser extent for the high SES boys, normative encouragement from the parents in the diffuse form expressed through positive parental relationships, was a key requisite to upward educational mobility. High class boys in 1974 were, in part, an exception to this rule, since these individuals were especially prone to a great deal of pressure from their parents to be educationally and occupationally successful; consequently excess emphasis on "getting ahead," has lead to a separation of parents from sons, especially during a time marked by high educational costs and a relatively closed economic structure.

Perhaps the most striking finding is in the trend of relationships over time. Social class has been found to be, in countless research efforts (many of which have been discussed in the opening chapter of this study), a powerful determinant of the educational plans of youth. In 1957/58 and in 1974, these data too, showed this to be the case, for boys as well as for girls. In 1968, however, the impact of social class on the educational careers of boys and girls faded off to an almost negligible level, even while controlling for parent-child rapport. This phenomenon may be partially explained by the fact that college in 1968 provided a "legitimate" deferment from the Armed Forces, at least for the boys.

But there was something more than the "threat" of service in the Viet Nam War accounting for the relative unimportance of social class backgrounds that encompassed even the girls in 1968. For one, the national economy was operating at "capacity," where production was high and unemployment was at a relatively low level (3.6%).[13] Also at this time,

[13] See Table 351, p 221, in Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1972; Bureau of the Census.

college enrollments were rapidly growing,[14] and the notion that a "good" job would be waiting for anyone with a college degree, was as popular as ever. A third, and perhaps most important factor for the youngsters in Ontonagon County, was that even the less wealthy families were able to put enough resources to the side to enable their sons and daughters to get a college education. In effect, there was a period during the 1960's, where the traditional system of structured inequalities "loosened," offering girls and even low class youngsters an opportunity to pursue a college career. Since the late 1960's, however, the traditional barriers have been reconstructed; although girls have continued to go to college, the proportion of low class youngsters, especially boys, who planned to go to college, reverted to its original state.

Keeping in mind the dramatic changes which occurred in 1968, seemingly defying the traditional structures of educational inequalities, further analysis is conducted regarding the intervening effects of scholastic performance. I shall begin by exploring the changes and trends in the effects of social class on educational plans, while controlling for grades in school. GRADES is later introduced as an intervening test variable to help interpret the flow of influence from PCR to PLANS.

Scholastic Performance as an Intervening Variable

The fact that the explanatory power of socioeconomic status decreased in 1968 and increased in 1974, in accounting for the college plans of boys, may perhaps be better understood by how well these youngsters performed in school. First, it has been suggested that if the "military-aspirations" hypothesis is correct, then the greatest jump in the

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[14] Table 202, p 129, in Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1972, reports that: in 1957, 31.4% of persons 18-21 years were enrolled in college; by 1968 the figure had grown to 42.7%.

Table 15 Percentage Planning to Attend College, by Socioeconomic Status and Scholastic Performance: Three Cohorts Compared.

% Planning College

	Scholastic Performance: Low Grades			Scholastic Performance: High Grades		
	Socioeconomic Status: Low SES	High SES	Q	Low SES	High SES	Q
Boys (1974)	6% (32)	31% (26)	.74	41% (17)	60% (25)	.36
Boys (1968)	34% (35)	27% (26)	-.17	77% (13)	88% (16)	.35
Boys (1957/58)	13% (56)	23% (26)	.35	73% (26)	88% (16)	.44
Girls (1974)	10% (21)	50% (20)	.81	63% (32)	67% (27)	.10
Girls (1968)	25% (16)	33% (21)	.20	61% (38)	71% (28)	.24
Girls (1957/58)	12% (34)	27% (11)	.48	31% (58)	48% (27)	.35

proportion of low class boys planning to go to college would have occurred among those who ranked in the lower half of the class. Low SES boys who ranked high in grade standing would not be expected to have increased much in 1968, since these boys may already have planned to go to college by virtue of their school achievement. The same argument applies to high SES boys, since they, by virtue of their upper social status would have planned on a college education anyway.

By controlling on scholastic performance, GRADES emerged as an intervening suppressor variable (Table 15). The original negligible zero-order SES-PLANS association in 1968 was specified; registering a moderate positive correlation in the "high grades" category (.35) and a weak but negative association in the "low grades" category (-.17). Accounting for the absence of association in 1968 was, as expected, the unusually high proportion of low SES boys who demonstrated low academic achievement, yet who made the decision to pursue further education. By 1974, the proportion dropped down again, adding further support to the "military-aspirations" interpretation, and indicating that social class does indeed exert a powerful influence on the development of career ambitions, even while taking grade performance into account.

In 1974 the social class effect was as mentioned above, positive regardless of grade rank. Unique to the 1974 cohort, however, is the finding that social class was of considerably greater empirical import among the low GRADES group than among those who exhibited high educational achievement. Table 16 shows that, for high class boys, the absence of a high scholastic achievement level was not such a crucial factor, since the normative support in the family was strong enough to encourage college careers for many of these youngsters, despite their inferior academic showing. For youngsters from low class backgrounds, on the other hand,

Table 16 Percentage Planning to Attend College, by Scholastic Performance and Socioeconomic Status : Three Cohorts Compared.

% Planning College

	Socioeconomic Status					
	Low SES			High SES		
	Scholastic Performance					
	Low Grades	High Grades	Q	Low Grades	High Grades	Q
Boys (1974)	6% (32)	41% (17)	.83	31% (26)	60% (25)	.54
Boys (1968)	34% (35)	77% (13)	.73	27% (26)	88% (16)	.90
Boys (1957/58)	13% (56)	73% (26)	.90	23% (26)	88% (16)	.92
Girls (1974)	10% (21)	63% (32)	.88	50% (20)	67% (27)	.33
Girls (1968)	25% (16)	61% (38)	.64	33% (21)	71% (28)	.67
Girls (1957/58)	12% (34)	31% (58)	.54	27% (11)	48% (27)	.42

high scholastic achievement was requisite to a college future. These young men who lacked the normative and economic support characteristic of the high SES families, and who also tended not to receive even the valuable encouragement nested in positive parental relations, were subject to a severe inequality of educational opportunity. Of the boys in this category, who amounted to one-third of the male population in 1974, only 6% planned to pursue a college education; conversely, high SES boys who ranked in the lower half of their high school class, continued to make college plans at a rate five times that of their lower class counterparts. The conclusion is that grades in school, in 1974, were a valuable asset to the youngster who [illegible] to further his educational horizons, particularly for boys from low[illegible]ial class backgrounds.

The intervening effects of scholastic performance for girls, resembled closely the pattern of influence in the boys' case. Returning to Table 15, only in 1974 was the influence of socioeconomic status on college plans further explained by holding GRADES constant.[15] As with the boys, social class exhibited its greatest effect for girls lacking high achievement in school. The high SES girls were relatively unaffected by their grade rankings since the traditional social class influence was present regardless of how well the girls did in school. Low class girls, on the other hand, who did not experience high levels of normative (class) pressure in the home, were forced to rely only on their achieved status in school. Without high GRADES, low class girls are structured away from the educational mobility process in the home as well as at school. Table 16 makes this point clearer; demonstrating that low SES girls in 1974 were better than <u>six</u> times as likely to go on to college

[15] In 1968 GRADES tend to suppress the SES-PLANS association, but the suppressor effect is rather insubstantial.

if they ranked in the upper half of their class, than if they ranked in the lower half. Among high SES girls, however, the college plans of high and low scholastic achievers, were separated by only a 17% spread.

Scholastic performance has proven to be a powerful determinant of college plans of boys and girls, across both social class levels, and at all three points in time. Uniquely in 1974, the importance of school achievement was especially crucial for youngsters from low socioeconomic status origins who wished to go to college. These findings in 1974 are largely in keeping with our earlier statements on the scarcity of financial resources for college costs, and the belief that a college degree no longer assures entry into the white-collar work world. By controlling on GRADES, a more precise understanding of the social class influence on educational plans has been obtained. Particularly noteworthy is the discovery that social class and scholastic ranking exert substantial independent effects on the educational plans of Ontonagon County youth; furthermore, seen together, SES and GRADES act to condition the explanatory power of one another, vis-à-vis college plans. The next step is to introduce scholastic performance as an intervening control variable to the PCR-PLANS relationship. This procedure shall perhaps lead to a clearer understanding of the influence of parent-child relationships for girls and for boys, as well as provide an additional criterion by which to compare the normative influences of the PCR and social class variables.

Table 17 shows the proportions of youngsters planning to attend college, by parent-child rapport while holding scholastic performance constant. Earlier a moderately weak (.29) PCR-PLANS association, for boys, in 1974 was uncovered. By controlling on GRADES, it was found, that PCR exerted its greatest influence among boys who ranked in the lower half of their class. This finding follows the general pattern of the social class

Table 17 Percentage Planning to Attend College, by Parent-Child Rapport and Scholastic Performance: Three Cohorts Compared.

% Planning College

	Low Grades			High Grades		
	Parent-Child Rapport					
	Low Rapport	High Rapport	Q	Low Rapport	High Rapport	Q
Boys (1974)	8% (25)	24% (33)	.57	47% (19)	57% (23)	.18
Boys (1968)	45% (20)	24% (41)	-.43	78% (09)	85% (20)	.24
Boys (1957/58)	16% (25)	16% (57)	-.01	75% (12)	80% (30)	.14
Girls (1974)	28% (25)	29% (17)	.03	62% (21)	66% (38)	.08
Girls (1968)	29% (17)	30% (20)	.01	62% (26)	68% (40)	.13
Girls (1957/58)	14% (14)	16% (31)	.07	39% (18)	36% (67)	-.07

influence; boys in 1974 who showed low achievement in school were forced to rely on family characteristics, i.e., socioeconomic status and parent-child rapport, if they were to continue their formal schooling.

Again, corresponding with the SES effect in 1957/58 and in 1968, parent-child rapport was generally unrelated to college plans in 1957/58, regardless of scholastic performance, and exhibited a negative effect on college plans in 1968 for boys with low grades. The latter finding offers further support to the "military aspirations" hypothesis, revealing an extraordinarily high (45%) proportion of college-bound boys who experienced negative parent-child rapport and who ranked in the bottom portion of their class. In conclusion, it appears that parental rapport, at least in 1974 and in 1968 exerted a sizable impact on college plans, independent of the effect of GRADES. Moreover, the pattern of influence exhibited by PCR was closely allied with the pattern of relationships between social class and PLANS. By comparing Table 16 with Table 18, it is clear in 1974, for example, that grades in school were of the utmost importance only for boys who did not receive the normative support transmitted in high SES families, and in families marked by positive parental relations.

In the girls' case, the introduction of GRADES as an intervening variable, had an effect only in 1974. The connection between plans for higher education and parent-child rapport was shown to be a spurious relationship when controlling on scholastic performance (see Table 17). The weak (.22) PCR-PLANS association was "interpreted" by GRADES. In other words, for girls in 1974 the impact of relationships in the home on college plans was entirely indirect. Positive PCR encouraged high grades, which in turn resulted in the decision to pursue higher education. The sole importance of GRADES became further established in Table 18,

Table 18 Percentage Planning to Attend College, by Scholastic Performance and Parent-Child Rapport: Three Cohorts Compared.

	% Planning College					
	Parent-Child Rapport					
	Low Rapport			High Rapport		
	Scholastic Performance					
	Low Grades	High Grades	Q	Low Grades	High Grades	Q
Boys (1974)	8% (25)	47% (19)	.82	24% (33)	57% (23)	.60
Boys (1968)	45% (20)	78% (09)	.62	24% (41)	85% (20)	.89
Boys (1957/58)	16% (25)	75% (12)	.88	16% (57)	80% (30)	.91
Girls (1974)	28% (25)	62% (21)	.61	29% (17)	66% (31)	.64
Girls (1968)	29% (17)	62% (26)	.59	30% (20)	68% (40)	.66
Girls (1957/58)	14% (14)	39% (18)	.58	16% (31)	36% (67)	.49

where introduction of parent-child relationships was wholly inconsequential to the GRADES-PLANS association.

In concluding the present section, several simple generalizations about the intervening effects of scholastic performance may be derived. In 1974, socioeconomic status followed the traditional pattern of influence on the educational mobility of boys and girls alike. The positive impact of SES was particularly significant in cases where the benefit of superior scholastic rankings did not exist. In short, grades did not account for the effect of social class, rather, they specified the conditions under which SES was of greatest empirical import. Social class background and scholastic achievement level, "conditioned" the independent effects of one another, on college plans of Ontonagon County youth. Over time, the conditional effects of GRADES appears to be on an incline.

It is an empirical fact that the educational plans of boys have radically dropped over the seventeen year time period from 1957/58 to 1974 in Ontonagon County. It has also been pointed out that for a combination of reasons, the college plans of boys are becoming less dependent upon how well they perform in school, and increasingly dependent upon their socioeconomic backgrounds, over this same period of time. Consequently, high class boys with low scholastic performance levels, made up the only sub-group which had not experienced a sharp decline in plans to attend college, indeed, their educational plans had grown (see Table 16), thereby accounting for the empirical "split" in 1974. For girls, the growing importance of high grades in educational mobility process, especially for low class girls, largely accounts for the conditional effects of SES and GRADES in 1974. The only girls not to rise in the proportion who had college plans, were low SES girls who demonstrated low academic achievement.

The analysis conducted in this chapter has attempted to sort out some of the key structural features, located in the home and in the school, attributing to the educational mobility of boys and girls in rural Michigan. The presentation has moved systematically from a general marginal analysis of the study variables, into the basic intercorrelations, and finally to a multivariate elaboration of the principle interrelationships, through the simultaneous introduction of control variables.[16] Clearly, these data reveal that the process by which youngsters are "sifted" through the system is indeed, a complex one. In addition, it has been discovered that the educational mobility process, in all its complexity, has been changing rapidly over time since the initial phase of this study. Needless to say, such processes as reflected by these data, are by no means neat, tidy and comprehensible. In the final chapter of this thesis, however, the aim is to draw these findings together in condensed form, in an attempt to make some summary generalizations which may perhaps be extended beyond the context of Ontonagon County, to other rural areas [illegible]e U.S..

[16] Although college plans were partialled out by all three predictor variables (SES, PCR and GRADES) simultaneously, the high number of empty and "low frequency" cells did not permit the use of these findings in my interpretation. For this reason, presentation of these findings were excluded from this chapter. Furthermore, the "four variable" elaboration analysis, (also conducted using regression techniques), offered little insight into the interrelationships of the study variables, beyond the analysis presented.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Problem and Approach

Modern American society is characterized by an increasingly complex web of highly specialized social and economic roles. Consequently, educational attainment has become a leading criterion by which society's members are "sorted-out" to fill those roles. A crucial stage in the career development of young people, then, is at the point of deciding whether or not to pursue a higher level of education.

The factors that lead youngsters to advancement in the educational system are the general focus of inquiry in this study. Much past research has shown that factors relating to the school and the family, two primary agencies of socialization, asume a dominant role in efforts to explain the educational aspirations and attainments of youth. A secondary issue addressed herein involves the relative impacts of the schooling experience and the influence of variations in home environments on the structuring of educational mobility of young people in contemporary American society.

In formulating a useful approach for the present inquiry, a simple typology was constructed that draws a conceptual distinction between the "normative" and the "regulative" aspects of parental influence. This distinction asserts that (1) parents affect the aspirations of their children by the norms and values they pass on to them through the process of socialization (normative influence), and (2) the nature of the parent-child relationship regulates the extent to which children perceive and

share the expectations and value patterns of their parents (regulative influence).

The major emphasis of the present study was on the latter half of this conceptual model, namely, the regulative aspect; empirically, the focus was on college plans and scholastic performance. The sociological and social-psychological literature that addresses this particular concern appears to be somewhat divided on the issue however; one branch contends that positive parent-child relationships lead to high educational aspirations and achievement, while another branch proposes that high aspirants tend to experience negative relationships with their parents. In an effort to shed further light on the antithetical nature of these empirically based arguments, the present research explored the importance of parental rapport as it pertains to the career development of youngsters in the rapidly changing social context of rural Ontonagon County, Michigan.

Ontonagon County, the research site, is situated in the remote and rural northwestern region of Michigan's upper peninsula. The longitudinal study design encompasses three comparable populations of graduating high school seniors, namely, the 1957/58, 1968 and 1974 graduating classes. Each cohort is comprised of a near total representation of the county's graduating classes for these years.

Via self-administered questionnaires information was gathered on a wide range of topics dealing with the youngsters' perceptions of their own social situations in the county and about their plans for the future. The dependent variable, plan to go to college, was viewed as a major step in the process of upward social mobility; it was treated as a dichotomy (those students who did or did not plan to attend a college or university). The key independent variables were: 1) Social class origin, indicative of

the normative influences of parents, was measured by father's occupation classified according to the Duncan "Socioeconomic Index for Occupations." 2) Relationships with parents (parental rapport), representing the regulative effect of parents on the educational mobility of their children, was measured by an attitudinal scale designed to tap the youngsters' own perceptions of rapport with parents. 3) Scholastic performance level, reflecting educational achievement as an early step in the educational mobility process, was derived from the student's graduation rank. This factor, scholastic performance level, was conceptualized as an intervening variable which mediates the flow of influence from social class and parental rapport on to college plans. Sex differences were held constant throughout the analysis on the assumption that the process of educational mobility of boys and of girls are on several accounts inherently different.

An empirical analysis of the interrelationships among the key study variables at the bivariate and multivariate levels led to a wide range of insights into the role parents play in structuring the career ambitions of their children. Most interesting of all perhaps, are the conclusions relating to the dynamic nature of the educational decision-making process seen over three distinct periods in recent history. In the few pages to follow, an attempt is made to bring some of these findings and conclusions together in summary form, and to consider their relevance to broader social issues and to general theoretical concerns.

Summary of Findings

This section presents, in systematic fashion, the main body of empirical findings derived from this study of Ontonagon County high school seniors.

I. Distributional changes over time.

A. The percentage of both boys and girls planning to attend college increased dramatically from 1957/58 to 1968. By 1974 the percentage of boys planning on college had dropped to its original level, while the percentage of girls remained high.

B. There was a marked increase between 1957/58 and 1968 in the proportion of high school seniors from upper class backgrounds, remaining relatively unchanged in 1974.

C. Among boys, the degree of positive parental rapport expressed remained constant from 1957/58 to 1968, but dropped markedly in 1974. Girls, on the other hand, expressed significantly lower levels of positive parental rapport in 1968 compared with the 1957/58 cohort; from 1968 to 1974 there was little change.

D. In 1957/58 and in 1968 girls out-numbered boys in the top half of their graduating classes by a two to one margin; by 1974 this sex differential had been reduced considerably.

II. Major findings at the bivariate level.

A. Degree of Parental rapport and social class origin manifested no association in 1957/58 in both the case of boys and of girls. In 1968, however, largely because of a reduction in the proportion of low class boys who interacted positively with their parents, a positive association of moderate magnitude appeared. Conversely, in 1968 girls from the high class category showed a significant decrease in parental rapport; a moderate, negative association between parental rapport and social class origin was manifested. By 1974 parental rapport appeared to improve among higher class girls, but declined among lower class girls; among boys the level of association between parental rapport and social class dropped

slightly.

B. College plans and social class origin showed a moderately strong positive association in 1957/58 and in 1974 among both girls and boys. In 1968 however, due to the rising aspirations of lower class youngsters, the PLANS-SES association was reduced to a negligible level.

C. The association between college plans and parental rapport was rather weak at all three points in time regardless of sex. Yet because of the particularly high proportion "low rapport" college-bound boys in 1968 and an exceedingly low proportion in 1974, the association moved from a negative to a positive direction.

D. Scholastic performance is revealed as a very powerful determinant of college plans, especially among boys. Among boys, however, the importance of grades appears to be decreasing over time.

E. Social class manifests little influence on scholastic performance among girls, except in 1968 where a weak negative association was revealed. Among boys, the GRADES-SES relationship is rather weak, although consistently positive and increasing in magnitude over time.

F. Among boys, scholastic performance and parental rapport showed virtually no association at all three points in time. Among girls, however, parental rapport manifested a significant effect upon grades in 1957/58 and in 1974, but less so in 1968.

III. Multivariate elaboration.

A. Boys. Parental rapport was an important positive factor affecting the college plans of boys from low social class families in 1957/58 and 1974. In 1968 however, due largely to the unusually high proportion of college-bound boys expressing negative parental rapport,

the influence was moderately strong in a negative direction. The college plans of boys from high SES families, on the other hand, were not associated with parental rapport at all three points in time.

Girls. The impact of parental rapport on the college plans of girls was basically undisturbed by the introduction of social class as a control.

B. Boys. Taking SES into account, the conditions under which parental rapport influenced scholastic performance were specified. In 1974 the scholastic performance of low class boys was strongly influenced by parental rapport. High class boys on the other hand, performed far less well in school if they experienced positive relationships with their parents. In 1968, the converse of this pattern of relationships emerged although the relationships were generally of a lesser magnitude. The introduction of SES had little effect on the association of parental rapport and grade rank in 1957/58.

Girls. In 1974 and 1968, parental rapport and scholastic performance were correlated more highly among high class girls than among their low class counterparts. In 1957/58, however, only the scholastic performance of girls from low class backgrounds was affected by positive parental rapport.

C. Boys. Controlling on scholastic performance revealed that the college plans of boys with high grades were influenced by social class to a moderately strong degree at all three points in time. Among boys with low grades, the relationship between college plans and social class changed dramatically over the years. In 1957/58 the association was moderately strong, but in 1968 as a consequence

of a sharp increase in the proportion of low class boys planning college, the correlation was weak and in a negative direction. In 1974, also, an equally marked drop in the proportion of low class college-bound boys accounted for the exceptionally high PLANS-SES association.

Girls. Only in 1974 did the introduction of scholastic performance aid in explaining the relationship between social class background and educational plans. The college plans of girls achieving low grades in school were strongly influenced by social class origin. While high achieving girls, on the other hand, were just as likely to seek a college career regardless of social class background.

D. Boys. The influence of parental rapport on the college plans of boys in 1957/58 was unaffected by the introduction of grade rank as a control. Among boys with low grades in 1968, and largely as a result of an increased proportion of boys expressing negative parental rapport who planned on college, parental rapport had a relatively strong negative effect on college plans by comparison with their counterparts ranking in the upper half of their graduating classes. By 1974 this same category of college-bound boys with low parental rapport dropped to an exceptionally low proportion, thereby reporting a strong positive influence of parental rapport on college plans. Parental rapport and PLANS, on the other hand, were associated to a relatively low degree.

Girls. Only in 1974 did the introduction of GRADES as a control variable help to explain the relationship between parental rapport and educational plans.

Concluding Comments

The results of this exploratory study support the general idea that parents help shape their youngsters' career development through the normative expectations and value patterns associated with their socioeconomic status and style of life on the one hand, and via positive parent-child rapport on the other. Although the patterns of these influences are by no means constant, often differing for boys and girls and varying with changes in socio-historical context, the interpersonal relationships experienced between a student and his or her parents along with the normative climate (social class) of the home are two essential considerations in the understanding of the career development of youth. Hence, the findings that reflect the interactive conditional effects of parental rapport and socioeconomic background on the school achievement and plans to go to college of youngsters in this rural study population are of particular interest to the general objectives of this research.

In formulating a research approach, it was assumed that the norms and values associated with the social class configuration would be more readily evident to and accepted by youngsters who perceived a close, working rapport with their parents. That is, it was expected that the influence of social class would exert its greatest impact among youngsters expressing a high level of parental rapport. This hypothesis, however was generally unsupported by these data. Hence, it may be concluded that parental rapport sets the stage for the transmission of normative influences which affect the scholastic achievement and college plans of young people independent of, yet in the same manner as the influence of social class. In this sense parental rapport plays an important supportive role in the process of upward educational mobility by helping youngsters cope with the sometimes overbearing, sometimes ambiguous exigencies of the system in which they live.

Since the traditional socialization processes of girls, in contrast to boys, have not stressed the importance of educational and occupational "success," it may be that the encouragement to go to college gained via positive parental rapport is relatively insubstantial, as the present data tend to show. It is entirely possible that, in the case of daughters, the supportive roles and concerns of parents are focused upon goals that are perceived as far more vital or relevant than college for the successful adaptation of girls within the prevailing social order; such goals, for example, may be the development of necessary social skills to build a life that includes rewarding interpersonal relationships, making friends, or more specific knowledge about marriage, raising a family, migrating to new areas, or landing a job. Similarly a pattern of strong, supportive parental rapport has little effect upon the educational aspirations of boys who stem from upper class homes, since these boys already receive a significant level of normative encouragement to go to college by virtue of their social class origin. Boys from lower socioeconomic status families, however, are particularly dependent upon the diffuse form of parental support recieved via positive rapport with their parents. Lower class boys, of course, are expected to compete even though they may lack the level and kinds of normative support that upper class youngsters often take for granted.

Changes over time in the pattern of influence that parental rapport appears to have upon educational ambition, while not altogether clear does suggest some underlying regularities; among boys as well as girls from both higher and lower social class backgrounds, the importance of the parental rapport factor, as a determinant of educational ambition, seems to be increasing positively (see Table 12). In 1974, more so than ever before, youngsters planning to pursue college careers were more

likely to express a high degree of rapport with parents. Although this association remains rather weak relative to the importance of other determinants, a pattern seems to be established.

There are several significant conclusions to be made concerning the impact of the family on a youngster's scholastic performance. Among low SES boys who are not or likely to receive the normative impetus to perform well in school, positive relationships with their parents emerge as a crucial factor. Good rapport, one may surmise, acts as a supportive mechanism for these youngsters by facilitating their exposure to diffuse as well as specific normative pressures from their parents to achieve high grades in school.

As with low SES boys, girls, especially those from higher SES backgrounds manifest a stronger record of scholastic performance when relationships with parents are perceived or satisfactory. Among higher class families, however, the pressures on young males to succeed in school, to go to college, and to "get ahead" in general, which in recent times may have resulted in high scholastic achievement, appears to be linked also with the unanticipated consequence of alienating them from their parents, or vice versa.

Concerning the relative importance of achieved status in school versus ascribed social status of the home, a number of conclusions may be drawn from this study. The college plans of lower SES boys in the 1974 cohort are as dependent on the grades they get in school as they are upon positive rapport with their parents. In other words, if they are to be successful, it is far more important for lower class boys and/or boys who lack positive parental rapport to achieve high grades in school, than higher SES boys and for those who enjoy a strong level of parental rapport. Among lower SES girls, too, in 1974, high grades are practically

a necessity for college plans to be formulated; without a solid record of school achievement, lower class girls are structured away from educational mobility.

It may be useful, at this point, to view the findings from this research project in a more general manner. What are the implications one can infer about patterns and trends in the process of educational mobility that transcend this remote region of Michigan?

The most intriguing trend to appear in the structuring of young people's career ambitions, from a longitudinal perspective, derives from the social climate on the national scene during the 1960's. There were several major factors operating during the middle and late 1960's that profoundly affected the lives of American youth. The net effect was to change the social structural context of young people, and that context was markedly different from that of earlier and later cohorts in its effects on their career orientations.

Briefly, the conditions were these. The U.S. involvement in the Viet Nam war was deepening, placing many young men in a precarious position between the imminent beckon of the selective service system on the one hand, and the temptation of temporary deferment via the system of higher education on the other. What's more, mounting youth dissatisfaction and student unrest, vis-à-vis the Viet Nam war, was at this time coming to a head. General economic expansion through the 1960's was coupled with unprecedented affluency at many levels of society, including within the individual family unit. Perhaps the most significant development of all during the period was the institution of an implicit "open door" policy of the educational system itself.

All of these conditons, and more, are unique to a single, brief period in history, and all have been elaborated upon throughout the last

chapter with reference to a cohort of individuals who were at that time faced with decisions which would deeply affect their future lives. In the main, the outcome of these decisions is reflected in a zeitgeist of wholly "untraditional" character, and a socio-historical context in seemingly "wanton" transition. The composition of the college-bound segment of the study populations changed vastly during the first and second phases of the Ontonagon County project. In summary, respective cohorts moved from a traditional profile of generally low college plans, heavily favoring boys, and high class youngsters in 1957/58, to a situation marked by high college plans (over 50%), equally represented by males and females, and by youngsters from high and low class backgrounds in 1968.

The point being made here is that a link appears to exist between the changing social atmosphere of the late 1960's in the U.S., and an erosion of traditional structural barriers to the educational opportunities of rural Ontonagon County youth.

The obvious implication of this general conclusion is that the process of educational mobility is firmly woven into the socio-historical context of the times. This is partly because the structuring of educational ambition, unlike many other social processes, is inescapably shaped by dominant features in many of our major social institutions, and it is from within these institutions that the concept of a "general socio-historical context" is defined. The impact of the state of the economy, for example, on the educational aspirations of youth is self-evident, as the entire occupational structure, and the availability of jobs are integral elements of this institution. The educational system and the institution of the family are the two primary aspects of society considered in this study, and their impact to the educational mobility process has

been made abundantly clear. Mention has also been made on numerous occasions of the influence of the military institution, especially during periods of war.

Thus in a society undergoing rapid social change in terms of its primary institutions, such as our own, the educational mobility process takes on an extremely volatile character, Therefore—and this is the conclusion toward which this discussion has been directed—in order to come to any meaningful understanding of a complex social process such as the structuring of educational ambition among youth, it is necessary to take into account that which we call "social context."

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical significance of the parental rapport variable in the development of sociological knowledge relating to educational mobility, depends in part upon its uniqueness as a sociological concept. The conceptualization of parental rapport established at the outset of this study asserts that the normative expectations parents have of the attitudes, behavior, and goals of their children are mediated by the quality of the parent-child interaction, i.e., the level of parental rapport. On the other hand the main body of literature, some of which was discussed earlier, invariably views the quality of the relationship between parent and child as a "source" of influence, rather than a "condition" that sets the stage for the transmission of other normative influences. The question arises, then, as to whether or not parental rapport is a theoretically useful concept to explain patterns and regularities in the flow of normative influence within the family, beyond or in lieu of the more traditional conceptualization.

Since much of the explanatory power of parental rapport is of a "conditional" sort (in the statistical sense referred to in the elaboration

paradigm), it is far more meaningful to conceptualize it as such, and it lends a certain simplicity to our interpretations. Furthermore, interpretation does not become locked into a "psychological framework" of an either/or nature; positing for example the "deprivation-aspiration" hypothesis against the "reward-aspiration" hypothesis. Rather, parental rapport is conceptually independent from, yet, as a condition, is vital to the normative influences passed from parent to the child, be they "education-specific" (e.g., parental encouragement to go to college), an unspecified dimension of the social class configuration, or in a more diffuse form of "supportive" normative influence.

To answer the above question then, the approach and subsequent results of this inquiry suggest that parental rapport is an effective sociological concept to use in this particular line of research in conjunction with the more traditional concept and approach. Yet, in an empirical sense, parent-child rapport itself may perhaps never be entirely devoid of some form of normative loading, and therefore never entirely differentiated from the more traditional concept, simply because of the multidimensionality of any measuring instrument that purports to tap this phenomenon. This is not to say, however, that the quality of parent-child interaction does not also affect (as a reaction) high or low aspirations, as the psycho-analytic theorists would have it, only that this kind of approach is less easily fitted into the present boundaries of sociological inquiry.

A second important implication of this study is suggested by the observation that the educational mobility process is rather sensitive to changes in socio-historical context, as well as changes in regional context (Schwarzweller 1973) and cultural context (Schwarzweller and Lyson

1974). Hence, our attempts to piece together research findings in search of observed commonalities and regularities, with the idea of constructing a useful middle-range theory, are confounded by cross-cultural, inter-regional and perhaps most of all, historical variations affecting the study populations.

That such variations exist, and that the process of theory construction is impeded by a lack of knowledge about these variations, suggests, at least to some degree, the direction future research should consider. Lest this comment be misunderstood, I am not arguing the formulation of complete and total theories of social change and societal differentiation before we can sort out and piece together all the fragmentary bits of research that relate to this area. Rather, I am suggesting that social scientists in designing research strategies and in linking particular researches to studies conducted at different times and in different places, should be cautious of and take into account the inescapable socioeconomic differences and changes that exist or occur through time and space.

This suggestion, of course, applies to the findings of the present research endeavor and their relations to the body of literature cited in Chapter I. Therefore, to say that the findings of this research are entirely supportive of one side or another on the question of the effect of negative or positive parent-child relationships in affecting aspirations and/or achievement, would be misleading if not downright false, since many of these researches vary significantly over time and place, not to mention variations in the sampling and measurement procedures. Clearly there is a need here for further research and development of the impact of parent-child relationships on the achievement and aspirations of youth. My suggestion is that such future investigation begin by

replicating that which already exists, using comparable measuring instruments over a diversity of regional and cultural settings.

Practical Implications

Historically girls have out-performed boys scholastically at the primary and secondary school levels. Barring any significant biological superiority of girls or greater parental pressure on girls in the home, it appears as though differential treatments within the educational system itself may favor girls over boys. Furthermore, boys more often than girls have been exposed to aspirant norms in the family as well as in the school, and therefore, their college plans (and educational attainment) have exceeded girls' in past decades. This essentially describes the situation that seemed to affect the 1957/58 cohort. Curiously, very little has been made of this issue of sex differentials in the schooling process by comparison with that of racial and social class inequalities, and little if anything has been suggested to orient practical attempts that might change these inequalities.

For reasons outlined earlier in this text, it now appears that the traditional patterns of influence have been reversed and/or reduced. The wide gap between scholastic performance levels for girls and boys was substantially reduced in the year 1974, and the college plans of girls now surpass those of the boys'.[17] An important question to be addressed by parents and educators in Ontonagon County and in other rural areas manifesting similar sociocultural circumstances has to do with the consequences of this trend. What impact will these changes have on the traditional patterns of expectations among boys? Unless the upper ranks of

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[17] The U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Report on the "College Plans of High School Seniors: October 1974" (Series P-20, No. 284, August 1975) reports a like trend at the national level, where girls are now more likely to plan to go to college than boys.

America's occupational structure are expanded to absorb an increasing flow of career women, competition for scarce rewards will reduce the volume of boys recruited into top positions. A dilemma may become manifest: the changing norms affecting the goal oriented behavior of girls may jeopardize the traditional patterns of behavior for boys; this, in turn, may lead to unrealistic appraisals of self, or frustration among these young men over their inability to conform to society's expectations. In the long run structural pressures of this kind may quite possibly result in a gradual change in the structuring of career orientations for boys.

The task set before sociologists and educators who are concerned with the career development of these young men, especially those from low social class backgrounds, those lacking a feeling of rapport with their parents, and those demonstrating low scholastic achievement, is, in the short run, to formulate alternative educational channels that serve to broaden occupational options and horizons. For the long-term objective, however, the emphasis should be on formulating social mechanisms to undergird and stabilize the motivational aspects so necessary in the building of satisfying career goals.

One approach to the short term objective might be the promotion of higher level technical training centers where young people could develop necessary and useful skills in a variety of areas. Although two-year schools and vocational schools do exist, their role is peripheral to the traditional academic track and has not aided in taking up the recent slack of individuals who prefer not to attend a four-year college. There is a need to establish in this country a greater emphasis on specialized training for work oriented and technically inclined young men and women; perhaps analogous in some ways to the higher level

vocational schools in countries such as Germany, Norway or Great Britain.

The input of the present research toward the long term end has been mainly toward the elucidation of the parents' role in structuring the career ambition of their children. In short, the normative support gained by lower class or economically disadvantaged boys through positive relationships with their parents has proven to be crucial to their educational success. This fact elicits some interesting hypotheses about the link between a corresponding decay of parental rapport (i.e., an increase in tension) and waning college plans. Surely such a postulation merits further consideration than has been afforded by this explanatory research endeavor.

Limitations of the Study

As with most social research, this study is not without its shortcomings: methodological, theoretical, style of presentation, etc.. Many of the more obvious and specifically relevant limitations have been identified and discussed at appropriate points throughout. However, I should like to caution the reader more directly on a few weaknesses that were not made clearly evident earlier and which I believe merit additional comment.

Perhaps the greatest limitation involves the ambiguous meaning of the parent-child rapport variable. Although parental rapport in the "conditional" sense developed in this study is conceptually removed from the traditional measures of parent-child interaction as a "source" of influence, its meaning at an empirical level is somewhat unclear. I am hard put to determine just how far the direct impact of parental rapport measures up to its conditional effect. The reason is that its conditional

influence is largely born through the inferred diffuse form of parental support outside the conceptual model. Only in the context of a research strategy designed to specify characteristic elements of the diffuse configuration of parental support, would it be possible to discern direct from conditional effects.

Another drawback to the study relates to the conceptual equivalence of the college plan variable over time. It is rather unlikely that a college degree can enhance one's job opportunities today (especially in the present tight economy) to the same extent that it could in the past; in effect, a college diploma has in recent years suffered a "devaluation" on the job market. The changing meaning of a college education to Ontonagon County high school seniors has not been taken into account in this thesis. Thus it is quite possible that inter-cohort change in college plans may in part hinge on differences in their perceptions of the importance of a college career.

A final limitation worthy of special mention relates to the question of the over-all "generalizability" of the findings from this study. A properly framed answer is twofold, since the findings are of two types: those pertaining to the actual structuring of career plans at each of the three points in time (intracohort, static), and findings related to patterns of change over time (intercohort, dynamic). Findings and conclusions of the first type unfortunately tend to be limited to areas encountering relatively similar situational circumstances in the educational, occupational and family subsystems, i.e., rural, isolated, "developing," predominantly white, few job prospects, and relatively unspecialized school curricula. Intercohort comparisons, on the other hand, tend to be made at a more abstract level and are subsequently less situationally restricted than the "grass roots" type of conclusions; thus we

are able to generalize to a broader spectrum of settings. Notably, these generalizations have dealt with contextual change and its effect on the process of educational mobility as a whole. In either case, without the support of continued research in this direction, across a greater variety of populations and social circumstances, the validity, generalizability, and practical applicability of these findings will remain basically suggestive; the results of exploratory research.

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